

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Annual Business Plan

2021-22

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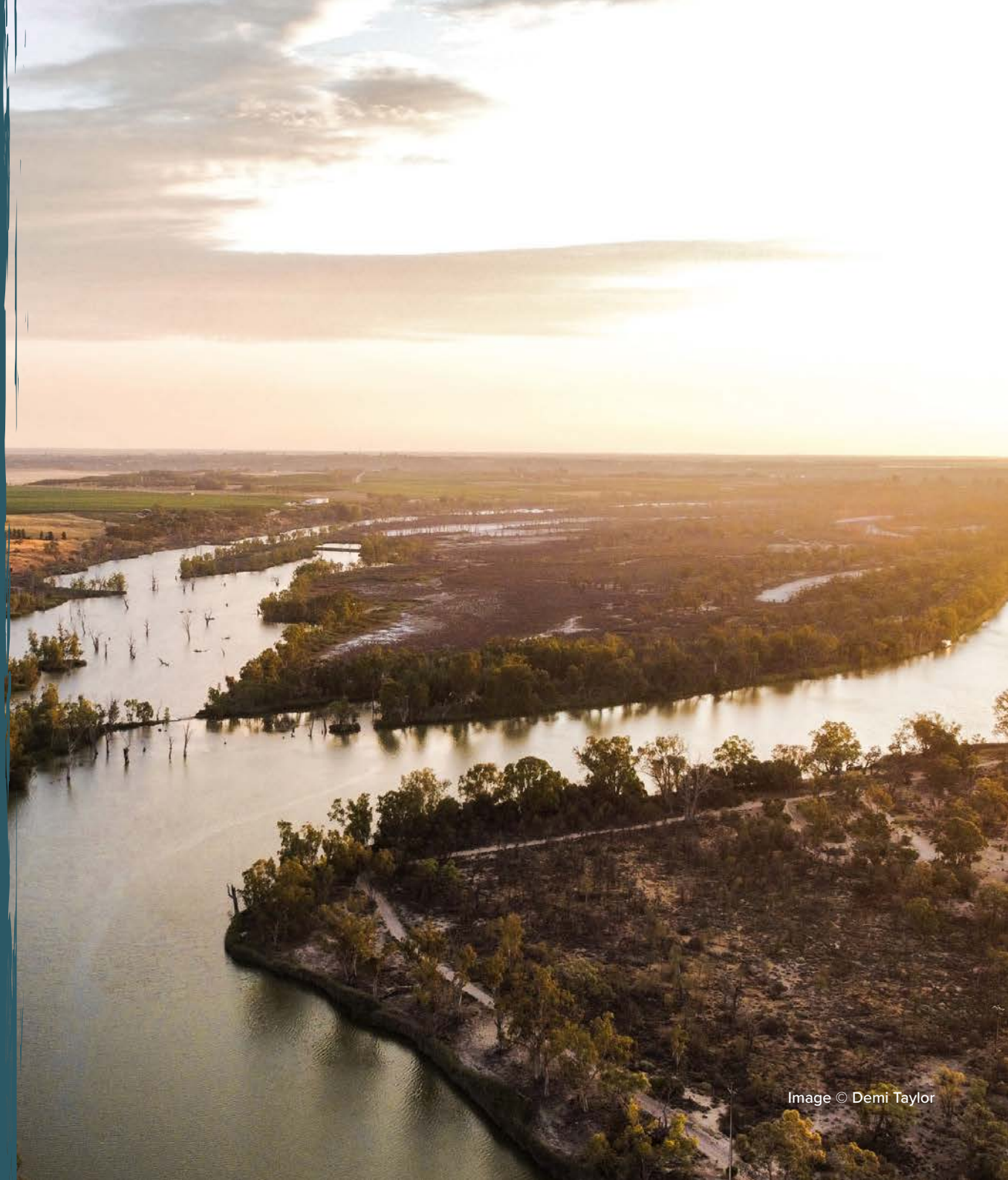


Government of South Australia

Murraylands and Riverland
Landscape Board

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and water that we live and work upon, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

Foreword



A Message from Dianne Davidson AM – Presiding Member

I am pleased to present the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Annual Business Plan. The landscape board is confident that our

2021-22 business plan will contribute to sustainable and resilient landscapes into the future, and I look forward to working in partnership with you to achieve it.

This business plan outlines the programs that the landscape board will invest in for the next 12 months, to deliver our vision, our priorities and focus areas as outlined in our landscape plan.

Looking ahead, we're excited about the future. Our core business will continue to be focused on work to sustain a productive economy underpinned by a healthy environment.

From a business perspective, we are working hard to diversify our revenue streams in a challenging financial climate and to establish a sustainable financial base that continues to support the organisation at the right scale and shape for what we do. We will maintain our focus on financial rigour, monitoring and reporting against performance.

The landscape board is excited by the opportunities ahead. We want to preserve our landscape for future generations and look forward to working with our supporters and partners to deliver this plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Davidson".

Dianne Davidson AM
Presiding Member
Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Date: 27 May 2021

The region

The Murraylands and Riverland region extends from where the River Murray crosses the border into South Australia, through the northern Mallee to the foot of the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges; and from the Rangelands in the north to the southern Mallee and the Coorong in the south. It covers approximately 53,780 square kilometres.

The following local council areas are included within the Murraylands and Riverland region:

- Berri Barmera Council
- Coorong District Council
- District Council of Karoonda East Murray
- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Mid Murray Council
- Renmark Paranga Council
- Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Southern Mallee District Council

There are also areas of unincorporated land around the Riverland and within the pastoral area.

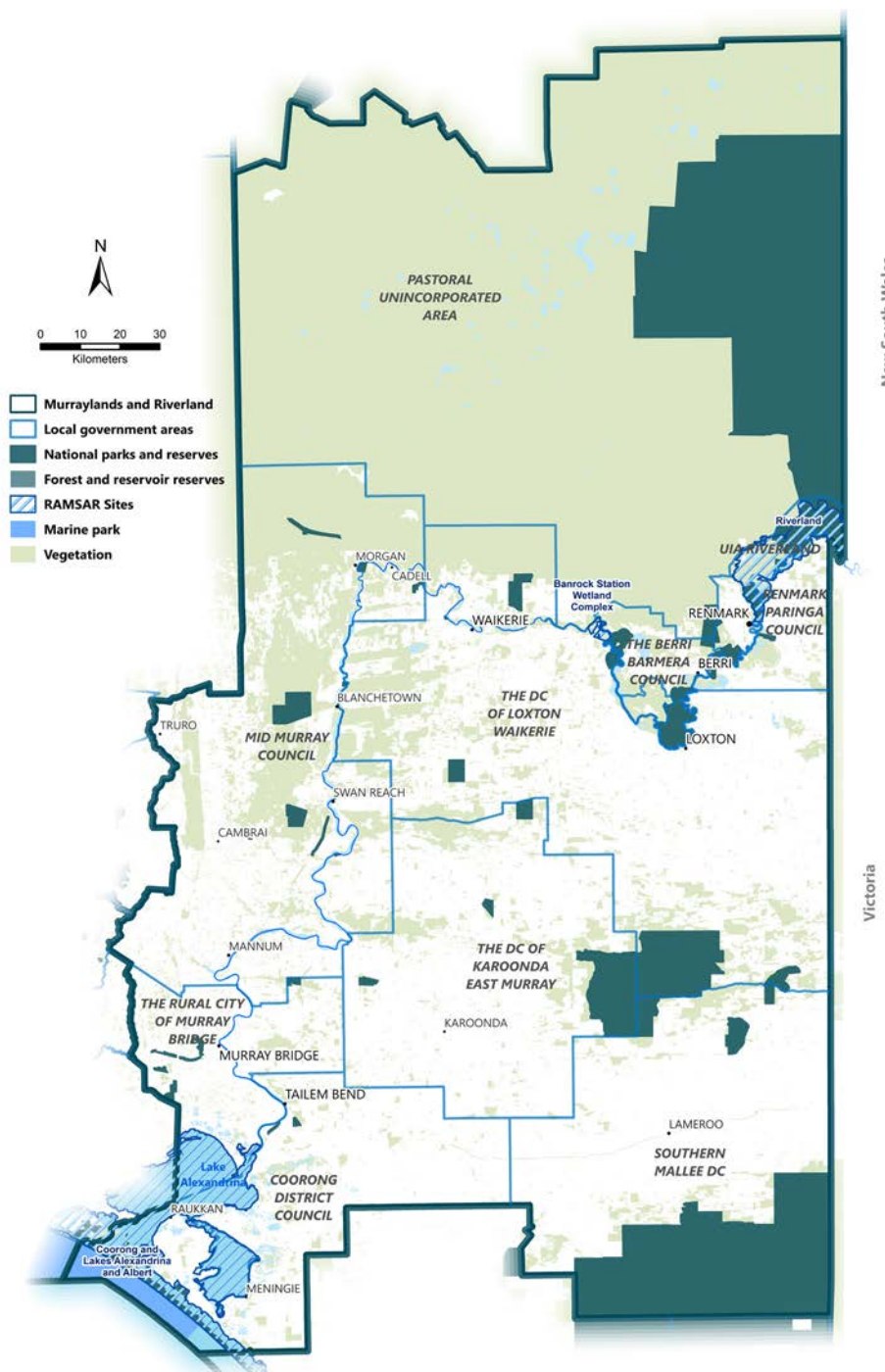
Our work occurs on the lands and waters of a number of First Nations including Ngarrindjeri, the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region, Peramangk, Ngadjuri, and Wilyakali. First Nations maintain a strong connection to their lands

and waters and are actively involved in managing the region's natural and cultural landscapes.

The region forms the south-western portion of the Murray-Darling catchment into which the River Murray flows and supports highly productive horticultural industries as well as significant tourism, recreation and manufacturing sectors. The region is one of the most productive agricultural areas in South Australia.

There are ecosystems of state, national and international significance, including the Ramsar listed Chowilla Floodplain, the Coorong and Lower Lakes, together with the privately owned Banrock Station Wetland Complex.

The region has a long history of volunteering in environmental management, with a wide range of active groups undertaking action to look after their local landscapes. Groups include Landcare and Local Action Planning Groups, land management groups, wetland groups, sustainable production groups and catchment groups.



Our role

We seek to undertake an active role in landscape management in the region. We do this by being the conduit and connector, bringing together the efforts of all levels of government, industry, key stakeholders, first nations and communities.

We endeavour to provide strategic leadership to strengthening community-led delivery for managing the natural resources at a whole of landscape scale.

As a statutory body and an instrument of the Crown, we are accountable to the Minister for Environment and Water and subject to any direction made by the minister. Funding for our programs and projects can come from a range of sources, particularly landscape and water levies, and from the Australian and South Australian Governments. We also seek opportunities to leverage additional funding through grants and industry partnerships.

While developing this plan, we have listened to community and stakeholder feedback provided as part of the preparation for the region's inaugural Regional Landscape Plan. The Regional Landscape Plan provides a shared direction for our work for the next five years, whilst our business plan sets out how this will be implemented on an annual basis. Continuing to strengthen partnerships with the regional community, including First Nations, will be a key factor in how effectively and efficiently we can work towards the desired outcomes.

As a landscape board, along with our skilled and supportive staff, we will strive to fulfil the vision of this plan by delivering on-ground action, providing advocacy, facilitation, education and funding for grassroots projects with our stakeholders in the region.

Guiding principles

- We work to sustain a productive economy underpinned by a healthy environment.
- We ensure climate science is part of all planning and decisions.
- We respect, recognise and are informed by regional and traditional knowledge throughout our work.
- We innovate in the solutions we implement.
- We seek continuous improvement to provide the best possible support for our region.
- We communicate and celebrate the impact of our work with the regional community.
- We bring people together to achieve the priorities for our region.
- We work in partnership with First Nations across all aspects of our business.

Implementing our work

This business plan sets out how the landscape board will deliver outcomes that contribute to the priorities and focus areas of the Murraylands and Riverland Regional Landscape Plan 2021-2026.

The landscape board invests funds from a range of sources which are detailed on page 10.

The landscape board's investment will be delivered through a range of approaches, including direct investment, contracts for works and services, and grants to community organisations. The investment is complementary to that of other organisations and individuals within the region.

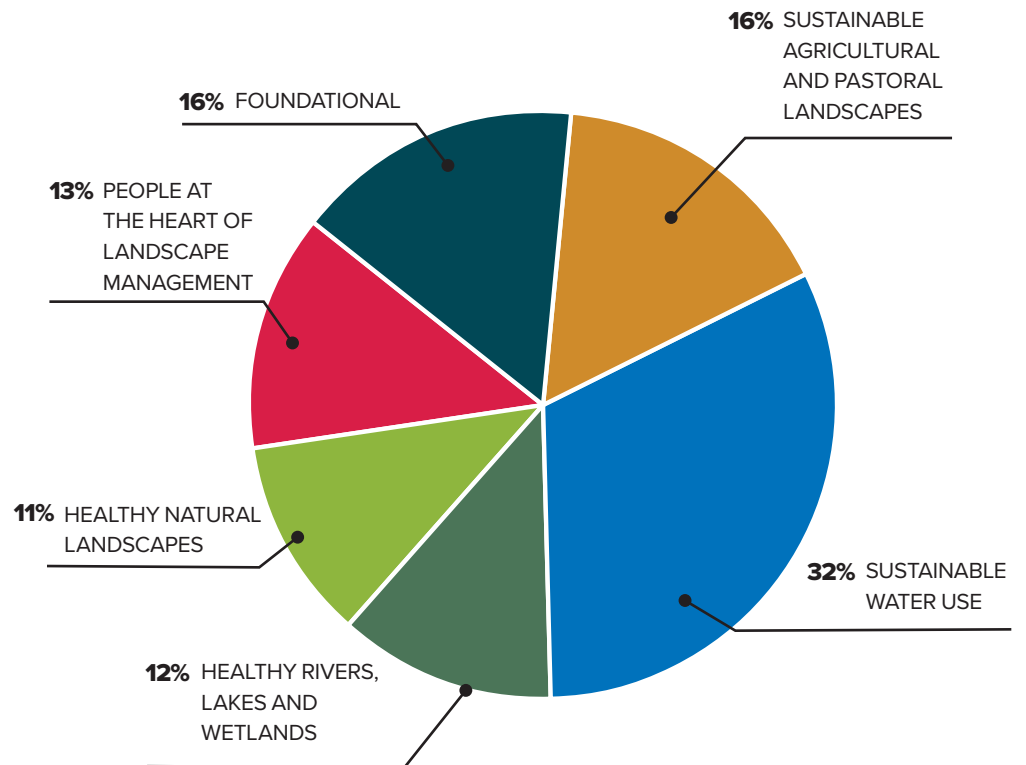
Table 1 summarises the landscape board's expenditure in each priority and foundational support.

The tables on the following pages outline the programs that contribute to each priority. The programs are designed to contribute to the suit of focus areas for each priority. Additionally, within each priority table is a program support line which includes administration and corporate governance, accommodation, leadership and regional land partnership program management unit costs.

Table 1: Expenditure by priorities and funding source in 2021-22

Investment by priority	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Sustainable Agricultural and Pastoral Landscapes	1,493,726	731,110	2,224,836
Sustainable Water Use	4,362,252	54,000	4,416,252
Healthy Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands	942,621	675,185	1,617,806
Healthy Natural Landscapes	866,404	694,847	1,561,251
People at the Heart of Landscape Management	1,797,862	-	1,797,862
Foundational Support	2,032,709	280,890	2,313,599
Total expenditure	11,495,573	2,436,032	13,931,605

Figure 1. Expenditure across priorities and foundational support





Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Sustainable Agriculture	327,043	-	327,043
Farm Soils and Vegetation Management	-	420,000	420,000
Regional Landcare Facilitator	-	136,000	136,000
Pest Plant and Animal Management	687,042	175,110	862,152
Program Support	479,640	-	479,640

Focus areas

- Work with industry and farming groups to identify and address soil management issues to improve soil health and build resilience
- Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity
- Promote and support the protection and enhancement of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation as part of a productive system
- Promote and demonstrate best management practices to retain ground-cover and reduce erosion risk
- Support land managers to build resilience in farming systems through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events



Sustainable water use

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Sustainable Irrigation	331,431	-	331,431
Water Planning and Management ¹	1,951,761	-	1,951,761
Water Allocation Planning ²	439,396	-	439,396
Water Literacy	-	-	-
Pest Plant and Animal Management	238,931	54,000	292,931
Program Support	1,400,734	-	1,400,734

Focus areas

- Work with the irrigation industry to optimise water use for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes
- Ensure sustainable water use by all water users in a changing climate
- Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes
- Support water users to build resilience through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events
- Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity

¹ State Water Planning and Management contributions include the following functions: water licensing and assessment, water resource monitoring, state and condition reporting for water resources, compliance activities and water planning advice to support the management of water resources. These services are provided by the Department of Environment and Water, including departmental staff based regionally.

² Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board shares two prescribed water resource areas (PWRAs) with neighbouring landscape regions. As the landscape board with the majority of the area of the resource, the Act requires Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board to be responsible for water planning for the Marne and Saunders PWRAs. For the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges PWRAs, that have a small area within the Murraylands and Riverland region, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board will be responsible for the water planning and implementation. The landscape boards will have agreements that set out how they will work together to effectively manage the resources, including how they will be consistent in approach and where specific responsibilities lie for planning and implementation



Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Wetlands and Floodplain Restoration	464,616	-	464,616
Restoring Ramsar Wetlands	-	675,185	675,185
Pest Plant and Animal Management	175,326	-	175,326
Program Support	302,679	-	302,679

Focus areas

- Manage and deliver environmental water to build the resilience of targeted wetland and floodplain ecosystems
- Actively manage watercourses for improved ecological outcomes in a changing climate
- Deliver initiatives that improve conditions for threatened species and culturally significant species
- Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes
- Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species



Healthy natural landscapes

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Landscape Scale Restoration	368,429	-	368,429
Restoring Iron-Grass Grasslands	-	440,000	440,000
Threatened Mallee Birds	-	200,000	200,000
Pest Plant and Animal Management	219,770	-	219,770
Program Support	278,205	54,847	333,052

Focus areas

- Work in partnership to manage total grazing pressure, including from over-abundant native species
- Work in partnership to proactively manage fire in the landscape to improve or maintain condition of key ecological and cultural assets
- Encourage targeted revegetation and restoration
- Ensure future seed availability of native species for revegetation in a changing climate
- Improve the level of protection for threatened and culturally significant species and ecological communities
- Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species



People at the heart of landscape management

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Grassroots Grants	333,289	-	333,289
Education Program	297,429	-	297,429
Aboriginal Partnership Program	338,999	-	338,999
Capacity Building and Volunteer Support	149,756	-	149,756
Citizen Science	101,090	-	101,090
Program Support	577,299	-	577,299

Focus areas

- Build and maintain strategic partnerships with, and between, stakeholders for mutually beneficial outcomes
- Work in partnership with First Nations to manage the region's landscapes, protect and restore cultural values and assets, and build capacity
- Partner with young people, foster their understanding, participation and leadership
- Strengthen capacity through increased knowledge, skills and participation
- Support community-led landscape management, providing resources to support community projects and practical action
- Recognise and encourage volunteers and volunteer community groups and support them to work safely and effectively



Foundational support

Program	Levies \$	External \$	Total \$
Board Leadership and Governance	177,961	-	177,961
Planning and Evaluation	569,734	28,000	597,734
Customer and Business Services	113,635	-	113,635
Communications	482,843	-	482,843
Council Levy Collection Fees	33,899	-	33,899
Program Support	654,637	252,890	907,527

Focus areas

- Develop the regional landscape plan and associated business plans
- Implement an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework
- Ensure contractual obligations that come with external funding are delivered
- Continuously improve the information management systems that support evidence based decision making
- Regular communication of landscape board business

Sources of funding

The landscape board expects to receive the funds outlined in Table 2, to implement our work. These sources include the regional landscape levy, the water levy, and various state and Australian Government funding programs.

Note: The information in this table is based on known funding sources. The landscape board may receive further funding from the Australian Government or other parties during the life of this business plan.

Table 2: 2021-22 Income

Income source	Budget 2021-22 \$
Landscape Levies	11,495,573
Regional Landscape Levy	2,925,172
Water Levy	8,570,401
Other Income	180,000
Animal and Plant Control Contracts	180,000
Grants - State Government	-
Nil	-
Australian Government	2,178,922
Regional Land Partnerships Program - Core Services	443,737
Regional Land Partnerships Program - Project Services	1,735,185
Grants - Other	77,110
Other	77,110
Total income	13,931,605

Landscape and water levies

The landscape and water levies are the primary source of funding for the management of the region's natural resources. Funds raised through the levies contribute to achieving the region's vision of *'Delivering a resilient landscape by working in partnership with the regional community'*. The levies also provide a unique opportunity to leverage significant amounts of external funding from government programs into the region.

Basis for the levies

When setting the levies, the landscape board uses the following principles:

Fairness

- User/beneficiary pays - people who are the beneficiaries of natural resources and their management in the region should pay accordingly.
- Shared responsibility - the responsibility to achieve ecologically sustainable development is a shared responsibility between the public sector, the private sector and the community.

Efficiency

- Certainty - the levy arrangement should deliver a certain outcome for the managers of the natural resources of the region and the 'users' of the natural resources, so that they can plan and budget accordingly.
- Resource use efficiency - the basis for determining the levy should encourage efficient and sustainable use, and the protection and enhancement of the region's natural resources.
- Administrative efficiency - the levy collection and management procedures should operate at minimum cost.

Governance

- Accountability - the landscape board should be publicly accountable for the expenditure of these funds.
- Transparency - the process for calculating the levy and the amount paid by users should be readily observable, subject to individual user confidentiality constraints.
- Reasonable basis - costs incurred in managing the natural resources of the region should be contained at an economic level.

Division 1 - Regional Landscape Levy

The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act) provides a range of options for calculating the regional landscape levy. Based on the principles established by the landscape board, the value of rateable land was used to determine the regional landscape levy. Regional landscape levies are collected by councils as part of rates notices to rate payers.

Table 3 outlines each council's share of the total regional landscape levy and the total charged per council. The table also indicates the amount each council can claim to offset the costs related to the collection of the regional landscape levy.

Table 3: Distribution of the Regional Landscape Levy by Council

Council	# of Rateable Properties	Indicative share \$	Collection fee \$
Berri Barmera Council	6,720	319,845	4,254.12
Coorong District Council	3,897	234,876	3,541.31
District Council of Karoonda East Murray	1,496	69,494	2,935.06
District Council of Loxton Waikerie	9,002	478,979	4,830.33
Mid Murray Council	11,514	560,716	5,464.61
Rural City of Murray Bridge	12,526	766,876	5,720.14
Renmark Paringa Council	6,095	360,751	4,096.31
Southern Mallee District Council	1,981	133,635	3,057.52
	53,231	2,925,172	33,899

Division 2 - Water Levy

The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act) provides a range of options for calculating the water levy. For the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse, option 'g' (the share of the water that makes up the relevant water resource) will be applied by the landscape board as the basis for calculating the water levy. For all other prescribed water resources within the Murraylands and Riverland region, option 'b' (the quantity of water allocated) will be applied as the basis for calculating the water levy. Water levies are collected by Department for Environment and Water.

The water levy will be payable by persons authorised by a water licence to take water from the prescribed resources identified in the table to the right:

- At the rate indicated in the table (right) or
- A levy of \$200, whichever is the greater.

The levy does not apply where the water is taken for domestic purposes or for the watering of stock not subject to intensive farming.

Table 4 sets out the water levy rates for 2021-22.

Table 4: Water Levy Rates

Prescribed resource	2021-22 Rate - \$/ML
River Murray – Metropolitan Adelaide Consumptive Pool (Class 6)	21.19
River Murray – All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 2)	21.19
River Murray - All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3(3a, 4, 5,7))	6.82
River Murray - All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3(3b))	6.48
Mallee – reticulated	21.19
Mallee	6.82
Peake, Sherlock & Roby	6.82
Marne Saunders	6.82
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges	6.82

Other income

Cost recovery

The landscape board will continue to implement a cost recovery program to partially offset the costs of pest plant and animal programs implementation throughout the region. It is estimated that the landscape board will recover approximately \$180,000 annually.

National NRM Programs

The Australian Government's National Landcare program (NLP) has five-year objectives, of which four are relevant to Murraylands and Riverland region. These include:

Environment Outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** By 2023, there is restoration of, and reduction in threats to, the ecological character of Ramsar sites, through the implementation of priority actions.
- **Outcome 2:** By 2023, the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act priority species, is stabilised or improved.
- **Outcome 4:** By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities.

Agriculture Outcomes:

- **Outcome 5:** By 2023, there will be increased awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation.

A major component of the National Landcare Program is the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program, which is a regional-scale service delivery model that was put out to tender for each of the 56 natural resource regions across Australia.

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board is the approved RLP service delivery agent for Australian Government's SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM region and is contracted to deliver the projects and services outlined in the Table 5 below. The landscape board may also negotiate other funding with the Australian Government under this arrangement.

Table 5: Regional Land Partnership projects and services

Regional Land Partnership projects and services	2021-22 \$	2022-23 \$
Restoring the ecological character of the Ramsar Wetlands to the SAMDB	675,185	675,185
Sustainable Agriculture	420,000	420,000
Iron-grass Grasslands	440,000	440,000
Threatened Mallee Birds	200,000	200,000
*Core Services	443,737	450,939
Total	2,178,922	2,186,124

* Core Services include maintaining a current natural resources management plan, supporting the community to participate in the delivery of projects, undertake communicate, coordinate the delivery of projects and monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI), undertake Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator services and maintaining a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Australian Government.

The landscape board and committees

The landscape board is a statutory regional board formed under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act). The landscape board consists of seven members from the community appointed by the Minister for Environment and Water on the basis of their skills and knowledge in natural resources management.

The landscape board may also form committees and other bodies to enable stakeholders to be involved in planning and providing advice on specific natural resource management issues.

The proposed fees for the landscape board and its committees come to a total of \$123,441 for 2021-22 which includes the sitting fees, training development, travel and meeting costs.

Staff and physical resources

Under the Act, the landscape board will have a General Manager and staff working to deliver its programs and services.

In 2021-22, it is anticipated that there will be 65 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (54.3 FTE funded by levies and 10.7 FTE funded by other funding sources) employed by the General Manager on behalf of the landscape board.

These staff are public sector employees. The landscape board will continue to receive corporate services support through the Department of Environment and Water in 2021-22 via a corporate fee.

The landscape board owns and leases buildings and sheds in various locations across the Murraylands and Riverland region. The landscape board does not plan to purchase any additional land or infrastructure assets in 2021-22.



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