



Annual highlights

of the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Welcome to the annual highlights report for the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.

In 2020-21, many projects and partnerships delivered great outcomes for the region that contributed to the enhancement and protection of the Murraylands and Riverland landscape.

Much of this work was funded by the levies paid by rate payers as well as considerable Australian Government investment.

This year the landscape board, in consultation with key partners and the regional community, developed and released its regional landscape plan. This plan is an important accomplishment that will provide direction and focus for the landscape board's work for the next five years.

The landscape board sincerely thanks its partners for their efforts in 2020-21 towards delivering a healthy and resilient landscape. The work that this report highlights has only been possible through the strong partnerships with landholders, First Nations, industry, government and the wider community.


“Working in partnership with regional communities to deliver a healthy and resilient landscape”


Highlights

- ✔ One thousand, four hundred and twenty four (1,424) farmers and advisors attended 46 field days, workshops and forum events that were supported by our Sustainable Agriculture Program.
- ✔ More than 768 landholders connected with our district teams on pest animal and plant management through one-on-one technical advice, plant identification and property visits.
- ✔ Focused fox baits program in February resulted in more than 14,070 baits being sold at events in 12 different locations, equating to approximately 351,750 hectares of land baited.
- ✔ The landscape board made final changes to the River Murray water allocation plan based on community feedback, and submitted it to the minister. This finalises the three year review of this policy.
- ✔ All water transfers associated with the Commonwealth On-Farm Further Irrigation Efficiency (COFFIE) pilot were completed in 2019-20 and the final parcel of 723 megalitres was transferred to the Australian Government in January 2021. A total of 2.1 gigalitres was transferred as a result of the COFFIE pilot program.
- ✔ The 2020-21 watering schedule delivered 9.99 gigalitres of environmental water from the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) to 32 wetland sites between spring 2020 and autumn 2021.
- ✔ The wetlands program (\$473,000 of landscape levy in 2020-21) leveraged an additional \$1.46 million in external funding to assist with the management of wetland sites across the region.
- ✔ Successful bid of \$700,000 from the Landscape Priority Fund to deliver a landscape-scale and multi-tenure project delivering practical restoration activities across the South Olary Plains.
- ✔ Important mallee bird habitat in the Southern Olary Plains has improved by reducing grazing pressure across this landscape as well as decommissioning 11 more dams in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- ✔ The inaugural round of the Grassroots Grants Program funded 28 local community projects, including 12 groups that the board had not previously worked with.
- ✔ More than 1,800 young people were engaged in the education program which included education sessions, class visits, field trips, Young Environmental Leaders forums, River Murray Youth Council program and community events.
- ✔ The regional landscape plan was developed, including a two-phase process to consult with stakeholders and the wider community.
- ✔ A new partnership between the landscape board, the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) and the Australian Landscape Trust (ALT) has secured \$4.8 million over seven years to continue the Indigenous Rangers program in the Riverland



Highlights


 **30,000 ha** benefited from pest animal control for conservation purposes


 **More than 4,500 ha** covered by species recovery actions


 **Engaging with our community** at 155 workshops, 3 conferences/seminars, 52 field days, 5 public consultations 24 training events, and 108 other events held

 **483 people** participated in volunteer events


 **6 priority aquatic threatened species and/or ecological communities** receiving targeted support


 **1,424 farmers and advisors** attended 46 field days, workshops and events held across the region to increase landholder awareness of best practice land management methods, including management of soil acidity, prevention of soil erosion, and increasing soil carbon

 **5.5 ha** of revegetation for conservation


 **8308.7 ha** surveyed for threatened species and ecosystem recovery

 **28 community groups** participated in the 2020-21 Grassroots Grants program with another **47 community groups** supported financially.

 **107.5 ha benefited** from weed control for conservation purposes

 **7,480 ha benefited** from weed control for land management purposes

 **More than 22,800 ha** of wetlands and surrounding floodplains managed to improve or maintain their condition, including three Ramsar sites

 **846,796 ha** benefited from pest animal control for land management purposes


 **Over 4,330 people engaged at events** 1,976 youth, 167 Aboriginal people, 409 volunteers, 127 teachers, and 1,659 other people


 **12 priority terrestrial threatened species and/or ecological communities** receiving targeted support


 **86 treatments implemented** to improve water management


 More than **60 education sessions** delivered on a range of topics, engaging more than **40 schools** and **1,800 students/community members** across the region.


 **Partnerships were created or maintained** with 136 community groups, 16 Aboriginal groups/organisations, 12 industry, 13 land managers/farmers, 24 special interest groups, 14 volunteer groups, 4 local government, 26 non-government agencies and 33 other government agencies


 **30 community and industry groups** were successful in the agricultural knowledge grants program for financial support to undertake events and activities

 **643 volunteers** registered with our volunteer program


 **38 on-ground trials/demonstration sites** have been established or maintained to address key regional soil management issues


 **12 land and 4 water compliance issues** investigated


 **408 land managers** involved in coordinated pest animal baiting


 **824 landholders and community members** directly supported through conversations and technical advice

 **A network of 40 automatic weather stations** providing local weather condition data and important farming indicators such as evapotranspiration, soil temperature, Delta T, and Grassland Fire Danger Index (over 70,200 visits to the regional weather station website in 2020-21)

 **47,284 ha** now under changed land management practices

 **42 properties spanning over 3,420 ha** participated in a Soil Acidity Citizen Science project resulting in 146 soil tests submitted

 Over **600 irrigators** have subscribed to the region's daily evapotranspiration forecast tool

 **15 Water Affecting Activities** permits processed and subsequently approved

 Regional Landscape Plan developed receiving direct feedback from over **100 individuals** and its consultation reaching **4,800 followers** via social media alone.

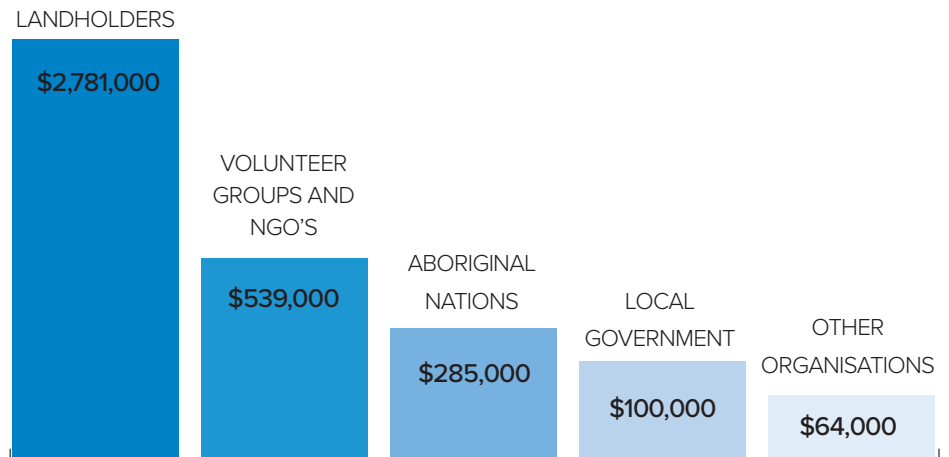
Investment in the region

Landscape levies play an important role in helping to secure our region's vision for working in partnership with regional communities to deliver a healthy and resilient landscape. Taking care of our natural landscapes is everyone's responsibility, and the levies enabled everyone to share the cost.

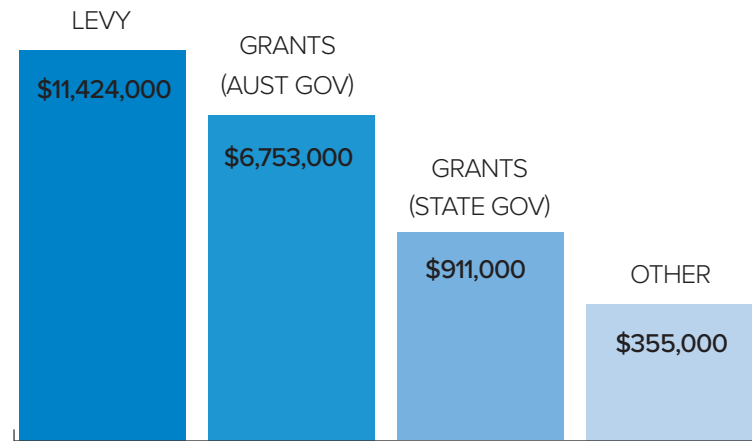
Funds raised through these levies are invested directly into this region and are used for a variety of regional priorities including managing land, vegetation and water, citizen science, community education and awareness.

The levies are used to leverage more funds from other sources including the Australian Government.

In the 2020-21 financial year, the amount raised from levies was \$11.4 million and \$6.8 million came from the Australian Government. \$1.3 million was raised through other funding sources.

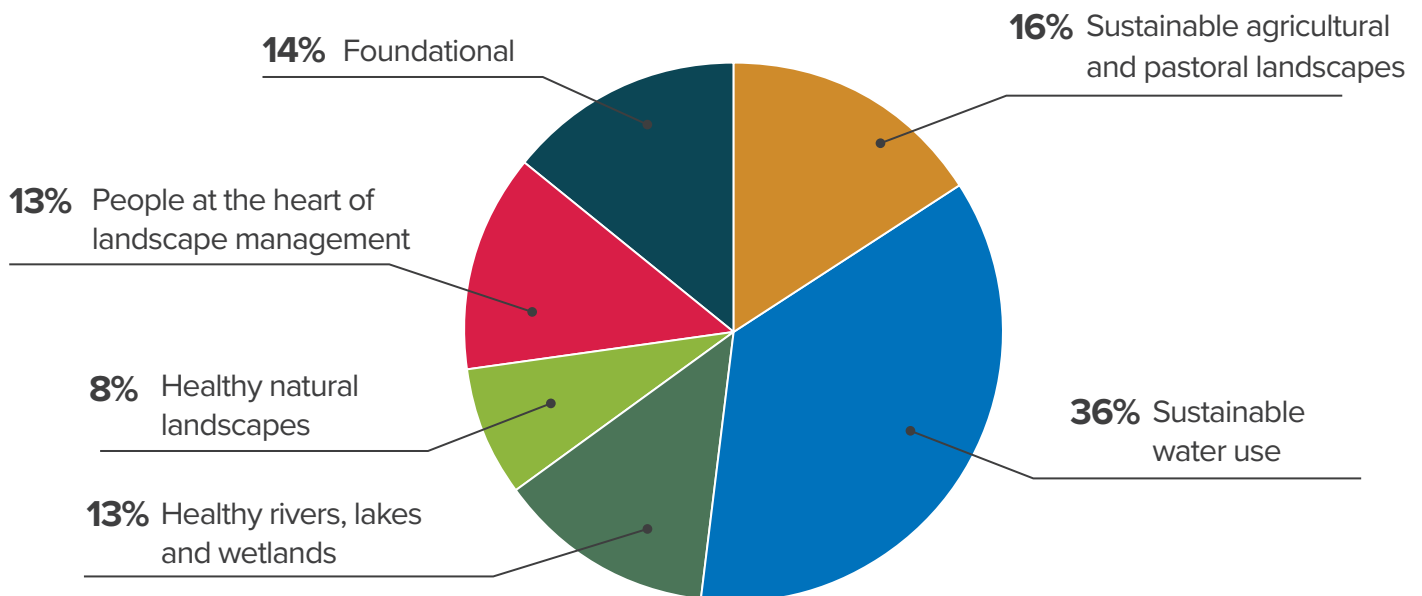


Support provided to the community



2020-21 revenue

Expenditure by regional priorities



*Foundational represents the expenditure on the enabling programs such as customer and business services, communications, planning and evaluation, and board leadership and governance.