

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

# Performance Report

Quarter 4 | April - June 2023

*Outcomes aligned with the 2022-23 annual business plan investment and priorities*



Image: Thomas Hunt



**LANDSCAPE**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
MURRAYLANDS AND RIVERLAND

# From the General Manager

I am pleased to present the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Performance Report for the fourth quarter of 2022/2023.

This report summarises the performance and activities over the past 3 months and tracks our progress towards delivering the investment and priorities as outlined in the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Annual Business Plan.

It provides the regular review of programs, services and projects and also highlights achievements, key partnerships and other related matters that have occurred during the period.

This report is one of the organisation's key reporting tools used to deliver performance related information to landscape board members, the organisation and the wider community.

I hope that you will find its content valuable and informative.















Andrew Meddle  
General Manager

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# 1. Executive Summary

In quarter 4 of 2022-23, the following progress has been made and program delivery is predominantly **on track** for the financial year.

Strategic Priority	Annual Business Plan Programs	Program Strategies
 <b>Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable agriculture</li> <li>Farm soils and vegetation management</li> <li>Regional Landcare facilitator</li> <li>Soil extension activities</li> <li>Pest plant and animal management</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (6)</li> <li>Completed (3)</li> </ul>
 <b>Sustainable water use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable irrigation</li> <li>Water planning and management</li> <li>Water allocation planning</li> <li>Water literacy</li> <li>Pest plant and animal Management</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (8)</li> <li>Completed (8)</li> <li>Postponed (2)</li> </ul>
 <b>Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetlands and floodplain restoration</li> <li>Restoring RAMSAR wetlands</li> <li>Pest plant and animal management</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (3)</li> <li>Completed (6)</li> <li>Cancelled (2)</li> </ul>
 <b>Healthy landscapes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape scale restoration</li> <li>Restoring Iron Grass grasslands</li> <li>Threatened Mallee birds</li> <li>Pest plant and animal management</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (22)</li> <li>Completed (1)</li> </ul>
 <b>People at the heart of landscape management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grassroots grants</li> <li>Education program</li> <li>Aboriginal partnership program</li> <li>Capacity building and volunteer Support</li> <li>Citizens' science</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (15)</li> <li>Completed (6)</li> </ul>
 <b>Foundational programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board leadership and governance</li> <li>Planning and evaluation</li> <li>Customer and business services</li> <li>Communications</li> <li>Council levy collection fees</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track (19)</li> <li>Completed (9)</li> <li>Behind schedule (1)</li> </ul>

## Highlights Summary

Highlights from the fourth quarter of 2022-2023 include:

- 17 Automated Weather Stations have been upgraded to CATM1 telemetry.
- The final outputs report highlighting the overachievement over the 5 year Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) Program funded by the Australian Government has been completed.
- An African lovegrass project plan was developed, setting up demonstration sites on best control methods.
- 173 groundwater samples were collected across the Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resources Area, Mallee Prescribed Wells Area and Peake, Roby and Sherlock Prescribed Wells Area.
- A new project to establish a comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework for the Marne Saunders catchment was successfully funded for the 2023-24 Business Plan.
- Community reference groups within the Mallee and Peake Roby Sherlock have been set up to work closely with both communities in the drafting of revised Water Allocation Plans.
- Around 200 Murray crayfish have been released into the wild as part of a landmark trial to reintroduce the iconic Australian species back into the South Australian River Murray.
- Five wetland field trips with members of the Ngarrindjeri community were undertaken to discuss their perspectives about the sites, their aspirations and ideas for future management.
- The first comprehensive weed mapping survey was completed by the Riverland District team covering at least 280km of the River Murray banks.
- 1,262 plants were resurveyed at 50 survey sites across 720,000 ha of mallee vegetation north of the River Murray during a goat browse monitoring survey.
- A workshop was hosted to share the landscape board's understanding about the Mallee looper, the moth-caterpillar causing wide-spread defoliation of Mallee eucalypts in the South Olary Plains.
- Surveys using a combination of call playback transects and songmeter were initiated, after a recent record of the Mallee whipbird was made in Ngarkat Conservation Park.
- The last field component of the black-eared miner Environment Restoration Fund (ERF) project was completed with 16 known colonies of black-eared miner surveyed in Murray Sunset in Victoria.
- 1,400 threatened and special plants were delivered across the region under the Precious Plants for Precious People program.
- The River Murray Youth Council (RMYC) program has reached its maximum capacity with 25 students participating.
- The education program engaged with 27 different schools, 144 students and 49 teachers and adults through 3 successful Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) forums and 2 Teacher Professional Development (PD) sessions.
- A large program of First Nations cultural training was delivered to landscape board staff, partners, and community members in partnership with the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation.
- A series of 4 climate change yarning circles with the Ngarrindjeri community were held as part of the Building the Resilience of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe Landscape Priority Fund project.
- Find Our Fungi 2nd edition booklet was released.

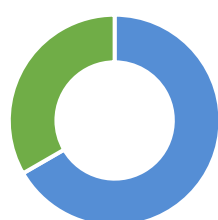
- 39 observations and 31 different species were identified during the Yookamurra Mallee Bioblitz including the native mardi gras cockroach (*Polyzosteria mitchelli*), which was the first record for the area.
- A total of 30 projects, amounting to an allocation of \$583,351, were successfully funded through round 4 of the Grassroots Grants program.
- A workshop on post-flood soil management was delivered in partnership with Soil Science Australia (SA Branch).
- 52 volunteers attended to 2 volunteer celebration events hosted to recognise the contributions they make to the region's programs and projects.
- The 2023-24 operational and plan budget was finalised followed by the approval and release of the 2023-24 Business Plan.
- Staff attended the SA Climate Practitioners' inaugural forum and the inaugural Industry Climate Change Conference.
- The MERI team finalised workshops for the baseline evaluation to assess the landscape board's performance in delivering the priorities of the Regional Landscape Plan (2021-2022) after the first year of delivery.
- A series of 6 interviews were undertaken with landholders who were engaged in trials established by the Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grasslands (INTG) project.

## 2. Performance by Strategic Priority

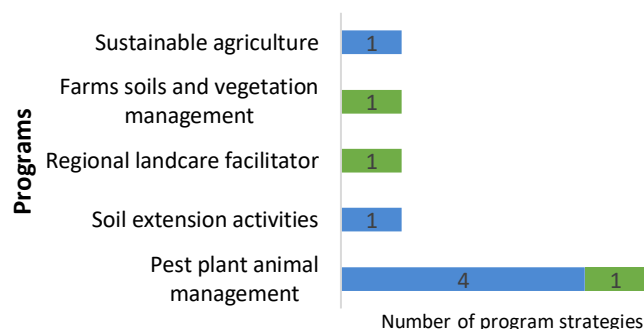


### Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

#### Status of program strategies



■ On track (6)  
■ Completed (3)



#### Program Progress Summary

Workshops and engagement activities featured prominently this period with various landholders, community groups and schools participating in Sustainable Agriculture learning opportunities. The summary of the RLP outcomes illustrated that engagement has been a consistent endeavour across the life of that project with a significant number of events held in a variety of formats during the project's 5 year duration.

Engagement work continues with several partnerships with landholders initiated for demonstration sites for pest plant control and biochar soils trials. The sites established this quarter will be monitored over time, with results analysed and reported after the trial concludes.

#### Program quarterly highlights

##### Sustainable Agriculture

- Project Officer Jeremy Nelson has continued work on the Automated Weather Station network with 17 stations having received the upgrade to CATM1 telemetry which will allow better connectivity and continue accessibility.
- Project Officer Denham Ewens presented with the education team at the recent Teacher Professional Development session as well as a school visit. The presentation focus demonstrated the way wind and water erosion affect landscapes .



*Photo 1. Sustainable Agriculture Officer Denham Ewens prepared and delivered a practical demonstration of wind and water erosion across various landscapes.*

- Through funding from Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) Program via the Agriculture Knowledge small grant round, Grain Producers SA hosted a 'Grains and Carbon - What's next?' event in Loxton. Oli Madgett from FarmLab shared his own experiences from the wine industry. While the space is developing, attendees heard the importance of understanding individual business carbon/sustainability benchmarks. This event was very well attended and presented, and highlighted the need for clarity for farmers in relation to the direction the carbon industry is heading.

### **Regional Landcare Facilitator**

- Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator Zoe Starkey has been a successful applicant in the Regional Development Australia - Murraylands and Riverland, Regional Leadership Development Program. This program will continue throughout the year with graduation in November.



*Photo 2. RALF Zoe Starkey taking 5 minutes to introduce herself, her role with the board, offering an ear for regional priorities and funding ideas.*

- The final outputs report which highlighted the overachievement over the 5-year Australian Government funded RLP Program has been completed. This is a summary of the various deliverables of RLP activities:
  - 8 baselines completed
  - 62 communication materials published
  - 39 field days
  - 84 workshops
  - 10 conferences/seminars
  - 79 on ground trials/demonstrations
  - 13 monitoring regimes
  - 551 soil tests conducted

### **Soil extension activities**

- Soil Extension Officer Barrie Williams worked closely with landholders and consultants gathering information for 2 case studies focusing on the soil microbiology under different treatments and land management systems in the southern Mallee.



*Photo 3. SEO, Barrie Williams establishing trial sites in the southern Mallee with the use of various composts and biochar.*

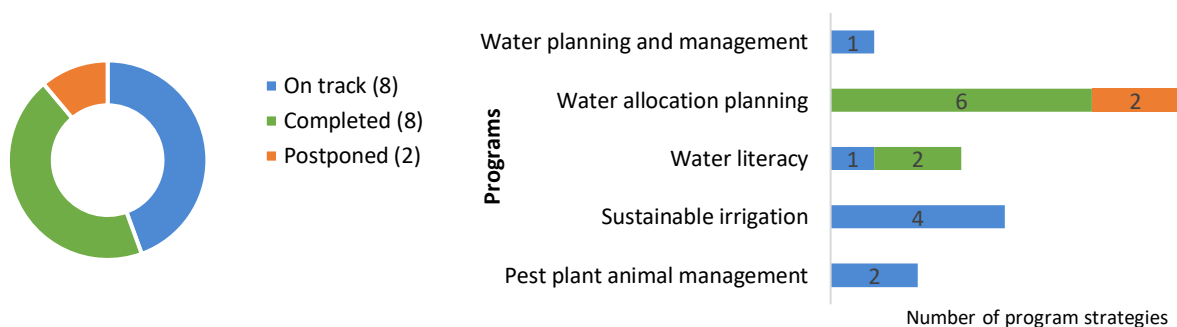
### **Pest plant animal management**

- Significant work was undertaken on a Hudson pear infestation on Jim Jolly road. This infestation is an ongoing project that will take a number of years to complete, however this reporting period, there was a positive breakthrough in communication with the landholder, resulting in a large number of plants being controlled and a pathway forward being established.
- The District team worked with PIRSA and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board to develop an African lovegrass project plan, setting up demonstration sites in both regions on best control methods. The Murraylands District team has been able to secure agreement from a landholder in Karoonda that will build on the outcomes of our previous project *Summer grasses*.



## Sustainable water use

### Status of program strategies



### Program Progress Summary

Collaboration and coordination were key activities in the water space this quarter, working with different industries and partner organisations in the development of future water projects or sharing of knowledge and information on the key issues.

The landscape board continues its efforts to put the community at the centre of water planning with the establishment of community reference groups in the Mallee, and Peake Roby Sherlock water resource areas, along with the completion of the Marne Saunders risk-based analysis which has been based on options derived and then further calibrated by Marne Saunders community. This collaboration with community will ensure that future reviews and amendments to water allocation plans will fulfil the concerns and wants of the community.

### Program quarterly highlights

#### Sustainable Irrigation

- The Expression of Interest process for the National Water Grid LMRIA Water Deliverability and Accessibility project closed and attracted strong interest from the community with the funds over-subscribed. This will ensure project outcomes are maximised and build longer term resilience and adaptability among local farming enterprises.



Photo 4. Landholders in the LMRIA have signalled strong interest in the National Water Grid LMRIA Water Deliverability and Accessibility project.

- Collaboration with the One Basin CRC increased significantly with the project co-design phase commencing. This will identify opportunities to participate in new 3 year projects that will commence in 2023/24.
- The team collaborated with SARDI to deliver a webinar for the Australian Wine Research Institute on brackish water utilisation as a drought adaptation response.



Photo 5. AWRI Webinar - brackish groundwater use and salinity management.

### **Water Planning and Management & Water Literacy**

- The annual groundwater salinity program concluded at the end of April. 173 groundwater samples were collected across the Marne Saunders Prescribed Water Resources Area, Mallee Prescribed Wells Area and Peake, Roby and Sherlock Prescribed Wells Area. The samples have been submitted to the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) for testing and results will be available on Water Connect for landholders to see.
- A new project to establish a comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework for the Marne Saunders catchment was successfully funded through the 2023-24 Business Plan. This project will produce up to date report card-style information for community and stakeholders, and will establish a robust monitoring framework to potentially enact adaptive management strategies.
- Staff have been coordinating with the DEW Flows for the Future team on monitoring equipment in the Marne and Saunders catchments.

### **Water allocation planning**

- The Marne Saunders risk-based analysis has been completed and reporting is underway. This analysis followed multiple community meetings to ascertain the community's concerns, and devise potential options they would like to implement. Through collaboration with DEW, the analysis was undertaken to assess the potential benefits of undertaking proposed options compared to 'business as usual' across multiple spatial and societal values. Final calibration of these findings was provided by community representatives.

- Community reference groups were established in the Mallee, and Peake Roby and Sherlock water resource areas with initial meetings taking place. Questions raised by community have been taken back to DEW and the landscape board to investigate ways forward to fulfil the concerns and wants of the community. The team will continue to work closely with both communities working toward the drafting of revised Water Allocation Plans.

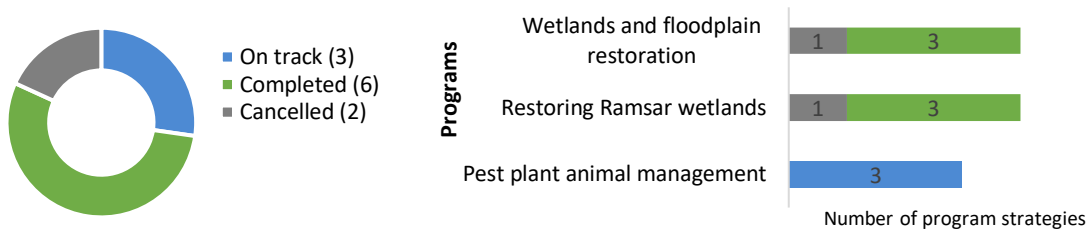


*Photo 6. Meeting with the Peake Roby Sherlock community.*



## Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

### Status of program strategies



### Program Progress Summary

The conclusion of the national 5-year Regional Land Partnership program was undertaken for several of the landscape board's program areas this quarter. The significant work it took during to finalise the analysis and reporting was rewarded through revisiting the positive regional outcomes that were achieved in and along our waterways through the period of that program.

The release of the Murray cray into the SA stretch of the River Murray was a valuable partnership endeavour that attracted a high degree of media attention and promotion for the landscape board's work.

The district teams made significant progress with pest plant and animal control, aided by the use of new equipment. This work encompassed currently funded programs, support for flood affected communities and finalisation of the national RLP program, and will inform planning and delivery of future initiatives.

### Program quarterly highlights

#### **Wetlands and Floodplain Restoration and Restoring Ramsar Wetlands**

- Over the last 5 years, the Wetlands program has undertaken management, ongoing recovery and enhancement of key wetlands along the SA River Murray, supported by funding through the RLP Program. This investment, some \$3.375M, has complemented funding provided by the landscape levy, the Department for Environmental and Water and the Commonwealth Environmental Waterholder. Funding has supported the planning and delivery of environmental water, on ground works to improve flow passage and water delivery operations, operational validation and ecological response monitoring and a number of special investigations to inform adaptive management, and specific management for a number of threatened species within these wetland environments - specifically within the 3 Ramsar wetland sites within the region (Riverland, Banrock Station and Coorong & Lower Lakes). Project works have now been completed, funding resources expended and the project deliverables successfully acquitted setting the tone for negotiations around a future proposal for investment under the new NLP Regional Delivery Partners approach to market.

- Around 200 Murray crayfish were released into the wild as part of a landmark trial to reintroduce this iconic Australian species back into the South Australian portion of the River Murray. Once common in the waters of the South Australia River Murray, the number of Murray crayfish declined to a point of virtual extinction as a result of overfishing, the effects of river regulation and declines in water quality. The reintroduction initiative has been guided by almost a decade of research and planning and builds on a similar project interstate.



*Photo 7. Darren Willis, Team Leader Wetlands, releasing Murray crayfish into the River Murray.*

The Murray crayfish released in South Australia were rescued from interstate sites affected by black-water events during the recent floods. This initiative is a fantastic example of cross-border collaboration by regional, non-government and community organisations and state agencies, all of which have played an important part in launching a trial of such significance. Further releases are planned over the next 4-5 years.

- The wetlands team, in collaboration with the engagement team, undertook a series of wetland field trips with members of the Narrandjeri community. Interested community members were engaged and provided perspective about the sites, their aspirations and ideas for future management. This program unfolded over five separate trips to wetlands on Hindmarsh Island (Hunters Creek, Shadows lagoon and the 'Outer' wetlands), at Clayton Bay, Wellington and the Narrung Peninsula and culminated in a 'coming together' meeting to bring all of the individual field trip participants together to reflect on the experience, the insights that came from the field trips and to consolidate thinking for the future. This process proved to be a fantastic experience for all involved, with more and more community members hearing about the opportunity as time went by and being keen to join in to the process. The final 'coming together' forum included around 40 community members and 8 landscape board staff in a discussion and generated a great deal of excitement about the possibilities for the future.



*Photo 8. Talking wetlands with the Ngarrindjeri community on country.*

## **Pest and plant animal management**

- Over the past 5 years the Regional Land Partnerships 'Ramsar' project has provided funding to support the management of grazing pressure impacts across 30,000ha of the Chowilla floodplain in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia (NPWSA). This effort included the establishment of ongoing commercial mustering of feral goats, commercial shooting operations for over abundant kangaroo species, and trapping operations for feral pigs. This consistent effort has resulted in significant reductions of feral pigs and goats across this important part of the region with end-of-year aerial surveys finding only a handful of goats and pigs which were then removed by aerial shooters.

The major flood event substantially constrained ground-based culling operations this year, none the less, some 80 feral pigs, 367 feral goats and 1,230 kangaroos were culled this year. *(NOTE: 939 of these kangaroos were part of a humane culling operation to address the problem of animals trapped on islands during the flood that were starving due to lack of food resources).*

- A further 13 pigs were removed from properties adjoining wetlands. This is important to project sensitive environments which are home to many native species (including threatened species) from predation pressures, considerable soil disturbance, damage to vegetation and risk of disease. The Riverland district team with the help of the Wetlands Team is supporting landholders to trap and bait feral pigs.
- Both District teams received a large number of enquiries from landholders requesting assistance to identify and control plant species they have observed after the flooding event. These visits have identified a range of locations near the river on floodplains and dairy flats in Blanchetown, Mypolonga and Toora, where Noogoora burr is quite prevalent, and land managers have been advised about appropriate techniques for removal.

These areas were surveyed and contact will be maintained with the landholders for support and advice as we progress through the post flood response. At other locations, a number of species identified were actually native plants that land managers didn't recognise as they had not germinated there for many years.

- Weed treatment works have been undertaken through the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project in and near wetlands. Treatment was undertaken by the Riverland District team and a contractor, assisted by the wetlands team, land managers and the Berri Barmerra Council. Golden dodder and Noogoora burr were treated at Old Parcoola Station, Martin Bend Reserve and Paringa Paddock. Additionally, a small infestation of yellow water lily was detected and controlled near the Berri boat ramp. Alongside the main River channel, Riverland District Officers and contractors also treated a range of priority species including Cylindropuntia, Opuntia, golden dodder, Noogoora burr, coolatai grass, boneseed and African boxthorn. These works were undertaken in Blanchetown, Cadell, Ramco, Overland Corner, Lyrup Flats, Berri and Calperum Station. Treatment methods included spot spray, manual removal, cut and paint, and drill and fill. Follow up visits to previously treated sites, are showing the success of chemical control methods.

Castor oil plant in particular, is not widely established in the Riverland and targeted removal of this small infestation is likely in coming months to prevent it from spreading.



*Photo 9. District officer treating Opuntia with drill & fill method.*

- The two district teams collaborated to survey a number of River Murray sections that will support the development of control plans under the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project.
- The Riverland District team was excited about the arrival of the long-anticipated 'Razor', an addition to our small fleet of boats, and this one was built locally in the Riverland. This boat is custom-designed to efficiently undertake weed mapping and also houses a 200L chemical spray unit to enable weed treatment at the time weed infestations are located. This greatly enhances the region's capacity to deliver on the multi-year Weed Warriors of our Waterways project, funded by the Landscape Priority Fund.



*Photo 10. 'Razor' the new custom-built weed control boat.*

- Following the arrival of the bigger boat, it was once again safe to be out on the River. The Riverland District team has completed the first comprehensive weed mapping survey, covering at least 280km of river by surveying both banks. The main river channel was divided into a number of stretches and each stretch has now been surveyed once. The results of this survey work will inform targeted control over coming months.

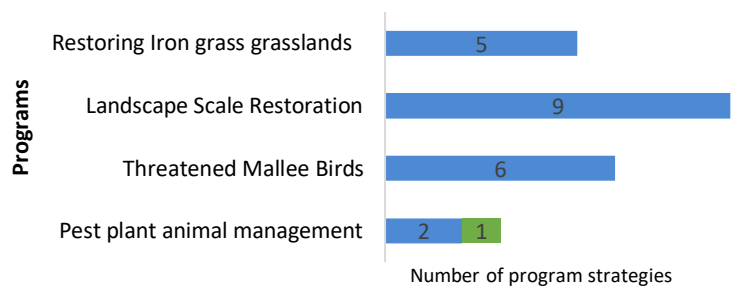
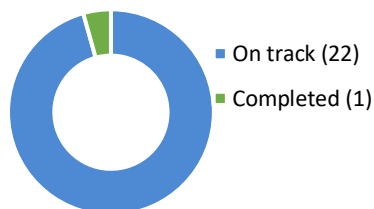


*Photo 11. Riverland district officers surveying the main river channel for weeds.*



# Healthy natural landscapes

## Status of program strategies



## Progress Summary

Working in partnerships, engaging others and the use of new tools has enabled progress to manage weed and vertebrate pests across the landscape. This encompassed large scale monitoring habitat impacts of feral goats over 10 years to inform development of future programs.

Investigation and monitoring was also a feature in a number of other ecological projects with information gathered being used to develop education and communications material to share findings. For some grassland work, trials are continuing and for threatened Mallee birds, the work being done is providing valuable insights into their response to environmental conditions, behaviours and preferences that contributes to and informs what needs to be done for various species to persist.

## Program quarterly highlights

### Landscape Scale Restoration

- The impact of feral goats on vegetation and ecosystem function has been of concern for some time. In response, multiple organisations have been undertaking direct herbivore control and the rationalisation of water sources such as dams. The aim of such control efforts and landscape management is to reduce browsing pressure and improve the growth, recruitment and recovery of native vegetation and thereby improve important threatened Mallee bird habitat.

In a broad-scale partnership approach, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape board staff along with the River Murray Mallee Aboriginal Corporation ranger team, Calperum North volunteers, Australian Landscape Trust and Gluepot volunteers, DEW Park Rangers, Artemis Hunting and Conservation SA and Wattleseed Ecology consultant resurveyed 1,262 plants this autumn to determine if these efforts are having the desired effect on threatened Mallee bird habitat. These plants were distributed across 50 sites scattered over 720,000 ha of Mallee vegetation north of the River Murray in the Riverland, South Australia.



Photo 12. Ellen showing the trainees the new apps for recording data.



*Photo 143. Murraylands and Riverland staff member measuring the height of an indicator plant.*



*Photo 134. Goat browse monitoring volunteers and staff.*

The great news is that current browse intensity for the majority of the study area has declined by 40% for both the highly palatable and moderately palatable plant indicator species from 2012/13 to 2023, however there is still more work to be done. This monitoring demonstrated that both highly and moderately palatable indicator species experience between 1.5 and 2.5 times the browsing intensity within 5 km of water compared to further away. Additional dam rationalisations are required to further improve threatened Mallee bird habitat.

- The Landscape Ecology team hosted a workshop to share their understanding of the Mallee looper, the moth-caterpillar causing wide-spread defoliation of Mallee eucalypts in the South Olary Plains. The workshop was attended by members from Australian Landscape Trust, Birdlife Australia, the Department of Environment and Water, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, National Parks & Wildlife Service, the National Environmental Science Program (Australian Government), and Parks Victoria, demonstrating the wide-spread concern about these recent events.

The Mallee looper has only recently become an outbreak species, with these outbreaks steadily spreading eastward from Gluepot in 2006 to the far side of the Murray Sunset National Park in Victoria in 2023. It impacts large proportions of eucalypt across the landscape and in some instances hits the same trees year after year, with the trees losing large proportions of their foliage each time. Possible management interventions and research priorities were discussed including a potential to control the Mallee looper using pheromone traps. While it may be possible to identify and synthesise the female pheromone and subsequently bait traps to reduce the number of males mating, this is currently a hypothetical concept. It is hoped that pheromone traps might be a tool to protect particularly important patches of eucalypts as landscape scale use would be unfeasible. More work is required to formally identify the moth responsible and gain a better understanding of the ecology of this species.

### **Restoring Iron-grass Grasslands**

- Our 5 year Irongrass Natural Temperate Grassland (INTG) restoration project has come to a close and the grassland team has been working on a series of legacy products to ensure the learnings continue to be spread through the grassland management community. Over the past 6 months, Colourblind Digital has been collecting footage of all aspects of the INTG project, including talks on the conservation of native grasslands and tips on best practice management of grazing sustainably. In addition, 5 YouTube videos have been drafted, covering different aspects of the project and learnings. There is an overview of the project, a description of the Iron-grass Natural Temperate

Grassland community as well as a Q&A session with Aimee Linke on the set up and management of the seed production areas. Finally, there is a short video exploring how the grasslands look from the perspective of an ant - designed to be entertaining and educational.



*Photo 15. Ben Fleming from Colourblind Digital filming native grasslands at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park.*



*Photo 156. Nicola Barnes and Aimee Linke being filmed at the Meldanda seed production areas.*

- Fifteen trials were set up during the INTG restoration project to see what types of interventions could improve the condition of the INTG. The trial sites have been monitored yearly to document any changes arising from the management interventions. The monitoring datasets have just been analysed and the results written up in fifteen reports, one for each of the trials. Some trials have shown positive outcomes for native plant abundance while in others the trends are not yet clear. Since the trials have only been run for a short time and change can be slow, it is planned to continue to monitor them over the next few years to gain more information about which methods are the most successful.

### **Threatened Mallee Birds**

- In the Murraylands, the nationally vulnerable Mallee whipbird has declined to dangerously low numbers. Wildfires, which devastated large expanses of Billiatt and Ngarkat Conservation Parks 10 years ago, are thought to have had catastrophic impacts on this species, with recent searches for the subspecies only detecting one individual. Further, wildlife managers are concerned that the vegetation reset in these parks means they can no longer support the subspecies.

The foot of Eyre Peninsula is considered a stronghold for the Mallee whipbird with an estimated 5,000 mature specimens known to occur across a mosaic of different fire histories present in the landscape, presenting an ideal study location. Members of the Landscape Ecology team worked with staff from the Eyre Peninsula National Parks and a contractor to search for the Mallee whipbird in Mallee of various fire-ages on the Eyre Peninsula. Forty five sites were surveyed within 7 areas of differing fire-history and 3 geographically distinct locations. More than half the sites had positive records and whilst some records were found in sites burnt more than 35 years ago, the majority of detections of Mallee whipbirds were in recently burnt habitat (4-15 years). This data suggest that Mallee whipbirds likely prefer recently burnt habitat, an encouraging finding for the subspecies and conservation managers in our region.

- After a recent record of the Mallee whipbird was made in Ngarkat Conservation Park during the Threatened Mallee Birds in Heathlands project, surveys using a combination of call playback transects and songmeter have been initiated in partnership with Riverland and Murraylands National

Parks. It is hoped that this work will give us a better understanding of the extent of area occupied by the Mallee whiplbird.

- The last field component of the black-eared miner ERF project was completed in May this year with 16 known colonies of black-eared miner surveyed in Murray Sunset in Victoria. Six colonies were located and, where viable, the individuals were given a phenotype score. One colony had 20 individuals captured and genetic samples collected. All samples are with LaTrobe University and a genetic analysis will be complete by September which will provide valuable insight into level of hybridisation and the relationship between genotype and phenotype which to date has been a significant barrier to the conservation of the black-eared miner.
- Two Landscape Ecology team members along with a number of contractors undertook surveys for the striated grasswren and red-lored whistler across the South Olary Plain. These surveys targeted past transects to look at the role that fire may play in protecting and restoring critical habitat for these species. Overall numbers recorded were slightly greater than in previous surveys which would likely coincide with some wetter years between surveys. The findings were in keeping with previous surveys and anecdotal reports that grasswrens are more likely to be found in habitat that has been burnt 10-20 years ago and that habitat condition at locations of a lot of historical sightings has senesced and are no longer suitable.



Photo 16. Striated grasswren - Bookmark surveys 2023.  
Photo Courtesy: Tina Gillespie.

### **Pest and plant animal management**

- DIT Road and Rail programs were all completed on time and within budget. This is a significant amount of work for the district team and contributes to protecting our region from new infestations that use these incursion pathways.
- The Murraylands district team was able to purchase a Rodent Blaster from California USA. This will enable the team to tackle rabbit warrens in problematic areas where fumigation or warren ripping are not possible.
- To raise awareness about priority roadside weeds, and promote the work the Riverland district team and contractors do to control them, signage has been erected at locations where the team have undertaken control for khaki weed, golden dodder and African lovegrass.



Photo 17. Roadside signage.

- Following a targeted mail-out, the landscape board received a report of 12 deer in the Loxton North region, with some photographed by a landholder and reported through Feral Scan. Follow up engagement with this landholder has resulted in the placement of a field camera. This camera has now captured images of several deer, confirming this is a location deer are visiting on a repeat basis. Having this knowledge is important in planning our approach to removing these feral deer from the landscape and protecting the environment and landholders' livelihoods.

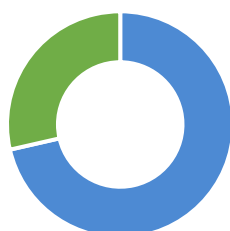


*Photo 18. Deer presence captured on field camera in a landholder property.*

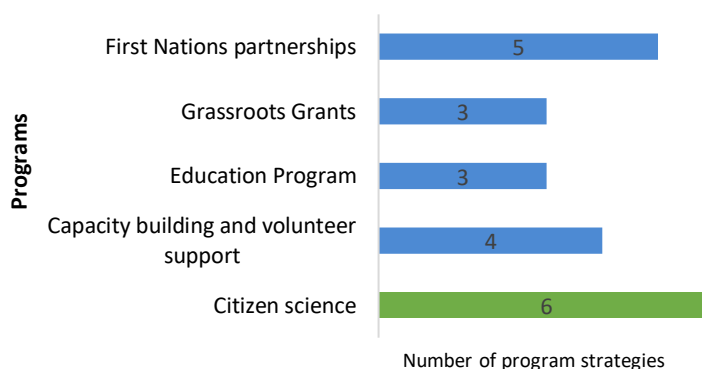


## People at the heart of landscape management

### Status of program strategies



■ On track (15)  
■ Completed (6)



### Program Progress summary

The landscape board has several key program areas aimed at engaging and connecting different segments of the regional community. The 2023-24 Grassroots Grant program funded 30 projects amounting to an allocation of \$583,351 to support local communities to build environmental resilience and sustainability in the region.

The Education Program's term 2 theme was sustainable agriculture' and activities covered a topics including soil quality, ground cover, alternative food production, First Nations' agricultural practices, biosecurity, native food production and regenerative farming practises. The Education team worked alongside the Sustainable Agriculture Team, Nockburra Creek Farms, Schubugs Cricket Farm, Earth restaurant, Nevarains Farm, Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) to deliver 3 successful YEL forums and 2 Teacher PD sessions.

Developing cultural awareness and competency is an important aspect of building the landscape board's ability to work effectively and respectfully with First Nations. This quarter saw the roll-out of a large cultural training program with the NAC for staff, partners and community members. Work has also continued to support the development of a cultural training program for the Riverland and Mallee with RMMAC.

The Citizen Science program continued to deliver a wide range of events that engaged large numbers of participants, with some events sold out. A celebration event for the Insect Investigators project was held this quarter with participants attending from across the nation. The event showcased the breadth of engagement and the huge number of new species of insects found through the project. The Find Our Fungi 2nd Edition booklet was released with great success and continued demand. A fungi photography workshop and Mallee Bioblitz at Yookamurra corresponded with the launch of the booklet and Fungimap's Great Aussie FungiQuest, for which our region was a target area. These events attracted good crowds and led to large numbers of new fungi records being contributed. The webinar was relatively easy to run and attracted and expanded the reach of the messaging well beyond our region.

## Program quarterly highlights

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### Education

- The 2023 Precious Plants for Precious People program has been the most successful yet with more than 1,400 threatened and special plants heading home to be gifted to precious people across the region.

Education Officers delivered classroom sessions about threatened species in 25 schools involving more than 1,300 students and 62 teachers/educators from Renmark to Meningie and everywhere in between.



*Photo 19. St. Alberts Primary School students holding their precious plants.*

This year the Murraylands program focussed on the threatened silver daisy-bush and the very special kunzea/muntrie plants with students learning about the impacts on local native plants and importance of native foods and bush tucker. The Riverland program evolved to focus on our vulnerable regent parrot. Students were able to learn about the plight of the regent parrot and what is being done to help. They also learnt about the local native plants that regent parrots rely on and each student took home a regent parrot food plant.

This program extended to a tree planting day with around 90 students from Loxton Primary school replanting a riverfront area in Loxton with floodplain trees and shrubs which are also important regent parrot food and habitat species. Not only a benefit to local bird and animals species this planting day was a great way to connect students with community as they replaced around 150 plants which did not recover from the recent flood.

The Precious Plants for Precious People program has now been running for 10 years starting with a pilot in 2013 with plants handed out to around 60 students for Mother's Day.



*Photo 20. A student from Loxton Primary school at the tree planting day*

- The River Murray Youth Council (RMYC) has been very active this quarter with meetings, activities, a YEL Forum and an additional lunchtime info session with Murray Bridge High School students. This session resulting in the recruitment of 5 new Murraylands RMYC members. This brings the total number of memberships to RMYC maximum capacity at 25, with 3 students on the waitlist.

The first meeting for the year brought together 9 Riverland members to Wilabalangaloo for a nature walk with new mentor and wetlands team member Olly Cirocco. June's meeting had 12 Riverland members meet at the Berri office where mentor Cindy Kakoshke facilitated the a water activity. The Murraylands May meeting was held in Murray Bridge, with 5 students in attendance. Mentor Hayley Jose presented on her PhD study on brown bandicoots. Members then participated in a bandicoot scat activity looking under microscopes to identify scat components.

The first RMYC joint activity day for 2023 was held in April at The Institute, Karoonda where 15 members and 5 mentors came together to spend the day participating in leadership activities and planning the year ahead. Members and mentors discussed the 2023 RMYC program and were facilitated through a leadership session with mentor Wally (Ian) Waltor and then brainstormed their top 4 themes for the year: Exploring local landscapes, loods (understanding impacts and management), monitoring, and pest management.



*Photo 21. River Murray Youth Council members and mentors in Karoonda at the Planning Day in April.*

Four members from the Riverland RMYC group were invited to participate in bird monitoring with wetland project officer Stephanie Robinson and Bookmark Creek Action Group at 3 sites along Bookmark Creek. Members learnt about the importance of bird monitoring at Bookmark Creek, how the data is collected, in addition to gainingfield experience. The Bookmark Creek Action Group expressed their thanks and appreciation for RMYC student's interest and were impressed with the bird identification skills of members.

Riverland RMYC students Phoenix and Noah supported the Term 2 Riverland YEL Forum on Sustainable Agriculture by running the embodied water game for year 5 and 6 students. This was a great opportunity for RMYC members to build on and demonstrate their leadership skills.

- The education team developed several educational materials and resources including frogs of Murraylands, Riverland and Mallee Fungi, regent parrot fact sheet with food plant list, PowerPoint presentation, printable cards and wrapping paper for precious plants program, and a Murray-darling carpet python information flyer.



Photo 22. Posters developed by the education team.

- Through the delivery of 3 successful Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) forums and 2 Teacher Professional Development (PD) sessions, the education programs engaged with 27 different schools, 144 students and 49 teachers and adults.

The term 1 education theme *Healthy Natural Landscapes* was capped off with a Riverland YEL Forum at Wilabalangaloo Reserve. A successful day with 8 schools bringing 44 students and 9 adults to learn about the important work done by the National Trust to conserve the plant and animal species in the reserve. Guest talks from Animals Anonymous and the RMMAC rangers on the day further enriched the students' opportunity to explore the importance of maintaining healthy landscapes for the survival of our native species.



Photo 23. Local students get up close and personal with a threatened Murray-Darling carpet python at the Term 1 Riverland Young Environmental Leaders Forum.

The term 2 theme of Sustainable Agriculture saw the team coordinate a YEL Forum and a Teacher PD in both the Murraylands and Riverland areas. Working alongside the sustainable agriculture team, the district team and a range of local farms and producers such as Nockburra Creek Mulberry Farm, Schubugs Cricket Farm and Nevarains Farm. These events were successful with great feedback collected through post-event evaluations. A total of 72 students, 40 teachers and adults from across 24 different schools were provided opportunities to learn about the importance of sustainable agriculture, maintaining healthy soils, and alternative crops and food sources in the region.

Students were able to explore factors affecting soil health and its importance for food and fibre production, while also learning about alternative food sources such as crickets. Educators heard from a variety of guest speakers including Pete Szabo from Nockburra Creek Mulberry Farm to learn from a local producer about the opportunities presented by alternative crops and sustainable practices such as cover crops.



Photo 24. Students visit Shubugs Cricket Farm as part of the Term 2 Riverland Young Environmental Leaders Forum.



Photo 25. Teachers from local schools at the Murraylands TPD session on sustainable agriculture.

### **First Nations partnerships**

- A major highlight for the quarter was the employment of Candice Love as Senior Project Officer, Partnerships and Engagement. Candice, a local Ngarrindjeri woman from Murray Bridge, is a qualified archaeologist and has previously worked for a range of organisations including the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation, Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority, and the Department for Environment and Water. Candice brings to the board a wealth of experience in Aboriginal heritage and culture management, natural resources management, and community engagement.
- The RMMAC Ranger team is going from strength to strength. During this quarter the team was involved in a wide range of cultural and environmental management projects including post-flood heritage site assessments, Living Landscapes heritage surveys, floodplain monitoring, Rapid Rabbit Assessment training, goat browse monitoring training, a National Malleefowl Recovery Group workshop, training in film making, and a ranger exchange to Maree with the Arabana Ranger team and the Friends of Mound Springs.



Photo 26. Candice Love has joined the organisation in the Partnerships and Engagement.



Photo 27. The RMMAC Ranger team receives training in camera use and film making from local First Peoples filmmaker Isaac Cohen Lindsay.



Photo 28. The RMMAC Ranger team at Cooltong Conservation Park for a Malleefowl workshop.

- A large collaborative Ngarrindjeri-led Landscape Priority Fund project, *Building the resilience of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe*, which began in March 2023, is off to a fantastic start. The 3 year project, which is being managed by the landscape board, includes a range of activities including priority on-ground works, Ngarrindjeri cultural site assessments, community yarning circles, and Ngarrindjeri community involvement in a range of threatened species recovery programs across Ngarrindjeri lands and waters. The project is a partnership between the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation, Limestone Coast, Hills and Fleurieu and Kangaro Island landscape boards, Raukkan Community Council, Goolwa to Wellington LAP, Langhorne Creek Grape and Wine Inc, Nature Foundation, the University of Adelaide, Aquasave-Nature Glenelg Trust and the SA Drought Hub. Project activities during this quarter have included cultural training for landscape board staff and partnering organisations, a series of 4 climate change yarning circles, a cultural assessment of the Bullrushes site at Raukkan, community Thukubi (turtle) interviews, community involvement in wetland fish and bird monitoring, a large Ngarrindjeri community wetland workshop, and community involvement and monitoring at Watchalunga Nature Reserve.



Photo 29. The new Ngarrindjeri-led project supports Ngarrindjeri community members to get involved in a range of activities such as wetland fish monitoring.

- A large program of First Nations cultural training was delivered to landscape board staff, partners, and community members in partnership with the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation. The training included 2 introductory 'History of SA' sessions and a series of smaller, localised Ngarrindjeri cultural inductions at Murray Bridge, Meningie and Goolwa. Participants in the program reported a wide range of outcomes from the training including increased understanding of our state's history, increased understanding of and empathy for First Nations communities, a better understanding of how to engage First Nations, and increased interest and commitment to partnering with First Nations in their work.



Photo 301. History of SA training in Murray Bridge for landscape board staff and partner organisations.



Photo 312. The Meningie Climate Change Yarning Circle coordinated by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation with the support of the SA Drought Hub.

- A series of 4 Climate Change Yarning Circles with the Ngarrindjeri community were held as part of the *Building the Resilience of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe* Landscape Priority Fund project. Events at Murray Bridge, Meningie and Strathalbyn, which were supported by the SA Drought Hub, provided climate change information to community members and explored the potential impacts of climate change on Ngarrindjeri culture and communities. The outcomes of the yarning circles will be used by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation to advocate for climate action, inform future research priorities and guide the implementation of the Landscape Priority Fund project.
- As part of the landscape board's on-going commitment to reconciliation, the meeting rooms at the Murray Bridge office have been given Ngarrindjeri names and local Ngarrindjeri artists have provided artworks. Local Ngarrindjeri elder Vicki Hartman provided the room names No;ri (pelican), Thukubi (turtle), Yalkari (old man's beard) and Ritjaruki (willie wag tail) and artists Jamaya Branson and Ray Love created the initial art works.



*Photo 32. Murray Bridge staff celebrated the new artwork with Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation members and artists during NAIDOC Week.*

- The landscape board partnered with the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) to deliver a community Animals Anonymous session in April at Willabalangaloo near Berri. The session was an opportunity for First People's community members to get up and personal with a range of wildlife and to kick off their involvement in an upcoming project looking at the Murray-Darling carpet python.



*Photo 33. RMMAC Rangers with a Murray-Darling carpet python.*

## **Citizen Science**

- As a precursor to Fungimap's Great Aussie Fungi Quest (for which our region was a target region) and to launch our Find Our Fungi 2nd Edition booklet release, we ran an online Fungi Photography workshop delivered by Nicola Barnes. The booklet has been disappearing like hotcakes ever since.



Photo 34. Find Our Fungi 2nd Edition booklet release.



Photo 35. Participants looking at lichen at Yookamurra Bioblitz.

- The sold-out Yookamurra Mallee Bioblitz, run in partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Mid Murray Landcare SA, Frogwatch SA and Ellura Sanctuary, resulted in 39 observations and 31 different species identified, including the native mallee cockroach (*Polyzosteria mitchelli*). This was the first record for the area, with the closest being from Ngarkat Conservation Park 240 km away.

17 other insect species, 6 different types of lichens including blushing scale lichen (which gets its name from the blush pink colour it gets when it's wet) and 2 different Find our Fungi focus species of earthstars were found.

The fungi found at Yookamurra at the Bioblitz were contributed to Fungimap's Great Aussie Fungi Quest. Approximately 250 records came in for the Murraylands and Riverland region through QuestaGame, and iNaturalist. The records included both fungi and lichens.

- People with an interest in turtles attended a workshop at Big Bend by Night at the end of May, coordinated with Mid Murray Landcare SA. A Welcome to Country by Issy Campbell from Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc, allowed us to share her deep knowledge of, and connection with, turtles of the area. Presentations on turtles, their threats and how to get involved in turtle conservation and citizen science initiatives were given by Professor Mike Thompson. After lunch, the attendees were taken by cart to the water's edge for demonstrations on how to protect turtle nests with mesh and how to set up the National Nest Predation Survey with chicken eggs. The whole event was filmed and once edited it will be released on Youtube.



*Photo 36. Workshop at Big Bend by Night as part of 1 Million turtles program.*

- The citizen science team valued being involved with the Volunteer Celebration Events. Attendees enjoyed the day and appreciated being invited and having their contributions acknowledged. We were able to cement relationships with volunteers and meet new ones, and talk about our projects and the activities they are involved with.
- Insect Investigators project came to an end in June and the project team and schools across Australia celebrated with an online event, but, the process of naming new species with schools and taxonomists continues. To date in SA, we have now met with 5 different schools to being the process of naming their new insects. All are parasitic insects, 4 are parasitic wasps and one is a parasitic blow fly.



*Photo 37. Kangaroo Island fly. Photo courtesy Dr Nikolas Johnston. University of Technology Sydney.*

## **Grassroots Grants**

- Through a comprehensive communications campaign and targeted engagement activities, we received an impressive 65 applications for round 4 of Grassroots Grants, with the total funding request amounting to \$1,040,864.

With a predetermined budget of \$371,718 available for granting, it was clear that additional funds would be necessary to meet the demand. Acknowledging the importance of supporting these initiatives, the landscape board allocated an extra \$100,000 to the grant program, bolstering the available funds.

To ensure a fair and objective assessment of the applications, an assessment panel was assembled. This panel convened and meticulously evaluated each proposal, taking into account the project's viability and alignment with the organisation's objectives. Following a thorough review process, a total of 30 projects were selected to receive grants, amounting to an allocation of \$583,351. We were able to leverage some unspent funds from the 2022-23 year, maximising our impact and effectively using available resources. This allowed us to support a number of deserving projects in full without having to shave money off their applications, and also highlighted our commitment to responsible financial stewardship.

The accomplishments of this campaign demonstrate our dedication to fostering community-led initiatives and empowering grassroots organisations. By providing critical funding and support, we are helping these projects make a tangible difference in their communities. Moving forward, we will continue to build on this success, refining our strategies to enhance communication and engagement efforts.

- 83% of round 3 grants have been completed on time. A small number have been given extensions to allow time to complete activities. Many of those given an extension had been affected by the recent flood.
- Final reports received this quarter have shared the great outcomes undertaken across our region. Numerous images have been shared with volunteers and groups undertaking improvements including protection and vegetation for species.

### **Capacity building and volunteer support**

- The landscape board collaborated with Soil Science Australia (SA Branch) to deliver a workshop on post flood soil management at Murray Bridge which was well attended by both landholders and local agronomy service providers.



*Photo 38. Soil Science Australia workshop: soil management post flood.*

- The landscape board hosted 2 celebration events to recognise the contributions that volunteers make to the region. One was held in the at Renmark and the other at Mannum.

These 2 events, held on the PS Marion paddle steamer and the PS Industry, made for an enjoyable morning, cruising along the beautiful River Murray. Guest speakers from the wetlands team showcased recent natural flooding events and the impacts on the wetland and floodplain ecosystems. This was followed with lunch where volunteers came together to celebrate successes and learn more about the work of other enthusiastic volunteers in the region. A total of 52 volunteers attended along with 3 MRLB staff.



*Photo 39. Volunteer celebration event at Mannum.*

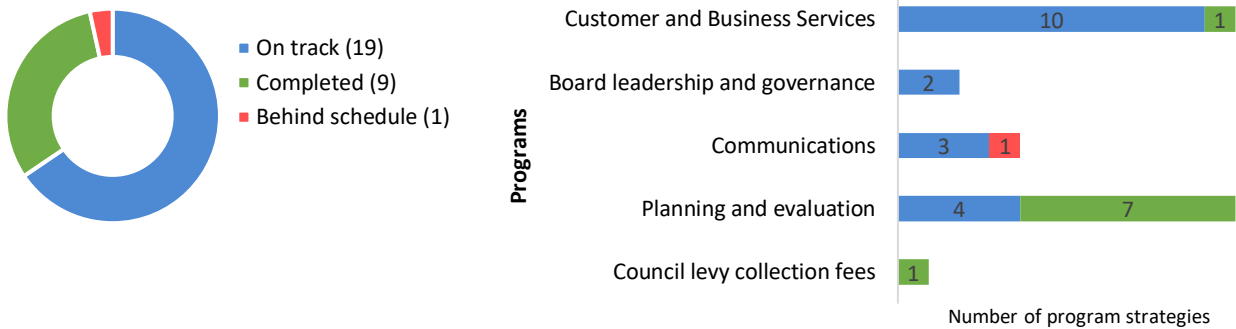


*Photo 40. The volunteer celebration event at Renmark.*



## Foundational programs

### Status of program strategies



### Progress summary

The Customer Relationship Management tool (CRM) was implemented and training carried out for staff across many of the landscape board's programs. The system is working well and staff have found it easy to use and a positive addition to record interactions with stakeholders. The CRM has also been adapted to record the landscape board's assets with the administration and finance teams working to complete an audit of all office sites.

Carryovers of expenditure budget from prior years required for 2022-23 and final budget submissions were approved by Department of Treasury and Finance in May. The finance team continued to work with team leaders to assist them to manage their team budgets. The 2023-24 Business and Operational Plan budget was approved by the board. Preparations began for end of financial year activities, tidying up the ledger, reallocating expenditure to align with budgets and ensuring we have staff available to complete working papers for Shared Services SA.

A flurry of final reports toward the end of this period showcased excellent outcomes for external reporting. Numerous projects have been granted funding to capture outcomes of previous projects. Some communication resources will be valuable for the landscape board to share with the community and stakeholders.

All semester 2 RLP reports were finalised and submitted on time highlighting the great work undertaken within our region.

Many records management catch-up tasks were completed this quarter. Other information management projects did not progress in this quarter as staff were contributing towards the business plan and Grassroots Grants, or on long service leave. These projects have been rescheduled to occur next financial year, so this program will be back on track.

Some progress has been made on the Water Literacy program with the investment and information team working on developing a brief for the project.

## Program quarterly highlights

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### **Customer and Business Services**

- Finalised the 2023-24 Operational and Plan budget with ELT and the Investment and Information team.
- Engaged a new independent Finance, Risk and Audit Committee board with the departure of independent member Jeff McDonald. Rob Denton-Brown has joined the committee and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from his time in government. The Finance team which supports the committee would like to thank Jeff for his advice and guidance during his time.
- All budget adjustment requests required for the 2022-23 financial year were submitted and approved by the Department of Treasury and Finance.
- With the implementation of the CRM on May 11, there have been 56 cases entered into the system from enquiries from the public. All have been actioned and closed.

### **Planning and Evaluation**







- Thanks to the efforts of multiple staff and feedback from the landscape board and stakeholders, the 2023-24 Business Plan was approved is available on the region's [website](#).
- All records management catch-up projects in the region are now complete, ensuring our compliance with all related legislation and setting the region up to move forward in their use of iShare with ease and confidence. Having another staff member that is confident in dealing with iShare/records management questions also helps staff find answers to their questions more quickly. Records management has moved into a maintenance phase and hopefully that maintenance effort will continue to be supported so we do not have to do any further catch-up projects, as they can be avoided with regular maintenance.
- Staff attended the SA Climate Practitioners inaugural forum and the inaugural Industry Climate Change Conference. The one-day forum was a fantastic networking opportunity for local government and agencies to meet and learn about recent projects while renewing connections and establishing new ones. The Industry Climate Change 2-day conference was another opportunity for networking, and businesses and local government predominated. The focus was on the opportunity SA has to use hydrogen to produce green steel and reduce carbon emissions. The use of fossil fuels by heavy industries is the main carbon emitter in Australia, SA can lead the way in reducing that impact. There were also discussions on electric vehicle uptake and challenges, sustainable agriculture and carbon accounting.
- This MERI team finalised workshops for the baseline evaluation to assess the landscape board's performance delivering the priorities of the Regional Landscape Plan (2021-2022) after the first year of delivery. Three rubrics workshops were conducted evaluating multiple themes including pest management, wetlands and landscape ecology. Great discussion and ideas were shared at the workshops resulting in various pathways for us to improve we progress the priorities of the plan.
- The MERI team completed a series of 6 interviews with landholders who were engaged in trials established by the Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grasslands (INTG) project. The aim of these interviews was to capture changes in land manager's practices, understanding, value and knowledge of INTG grassland through their involvement in the project.

## **Communications**

- The communications team came together to support the wetlands team in a national media campaign to showcase the organisation's involvement in the release of the Murray crayfish back into the South Australian River Murray. At short notice, the team organised a communications plan and media activities including an onsite media event, Facebook live and collected various footage and images for future use. The media campaign was hugely successful, attracting media interest from a wide variety of outlets and resulting in several stories including a piece on the national ABC Breakfast News show. Future follow up media activities include social media posts, a video and blog post.

### 3. Standard metrics reporting

The standard metrics are a defined and agreed short-list of measures the organisation counts for the purposes of communicating to the public and accountability to the executive leadership team and board members. These standard metrics quantify what has been delivered during the current quarter.

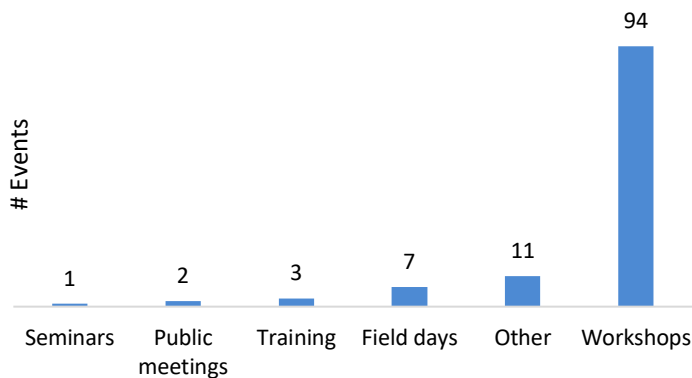
	Meas- ure	Frequ- ency							Q4 Actual
Area benefitted from pest animal control	Ha	Quarterly							241,223.5
Area benefitted from pest weed control	Ha								856.8
Area surveyed	Ha								32,884.8
Communication materials published	#								252
Compliance issues investigated	#								5
Development referrals responded to by landscape board staff	#								38
Events	#								118
Followers on social media	#								6,030
Groups financially supported	#								33
Individuals engaged at events	#								998
Land managers involved in coordinated baiting	#								82
One-on-one technical advice interactions	#								800
On-ground trials / demonstrations established or maintained	#								20
Participants at recognition volunteer events	#								52
Partnerships	#								153
Radio/TV/newspaper interviews conducted	#								28
Schools actively involved in the education program	#								40
Schools supported	#								97
WAA permits received and processed	#								3
Area covered by practice change	Ha	Annual							-
Area covered by species recovery actions	Ha								-
Area of revegetation	Ha								-
Area of wetlands and surrounding floodplain water regimes managed	Ha								-
Area treated by fire management action	Ha								-
External funds to levy funds	Ratio								-
Priority threatened species and/or ecological communities supported	#								-
Treatments implemented to improve water management	#								-
Volume of water returned to the environment	ML								-

Note: The shaded boxes above represent which priorities make up the total number of the quarter for each standard metric.

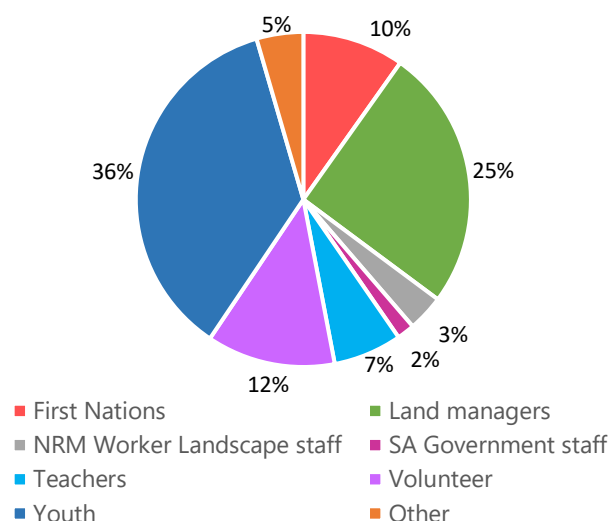
## 4. Stakeholder engagement

The landscape board seeks to engage with the community and diverse stakeholders through different activities, projects and media in order to work together towards long-term regional landscape outcomes. This section provides a summary of the stakeholder engagement during the current quarter.

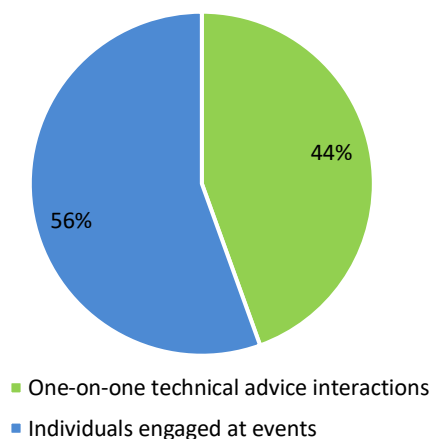
### Type of events conducted



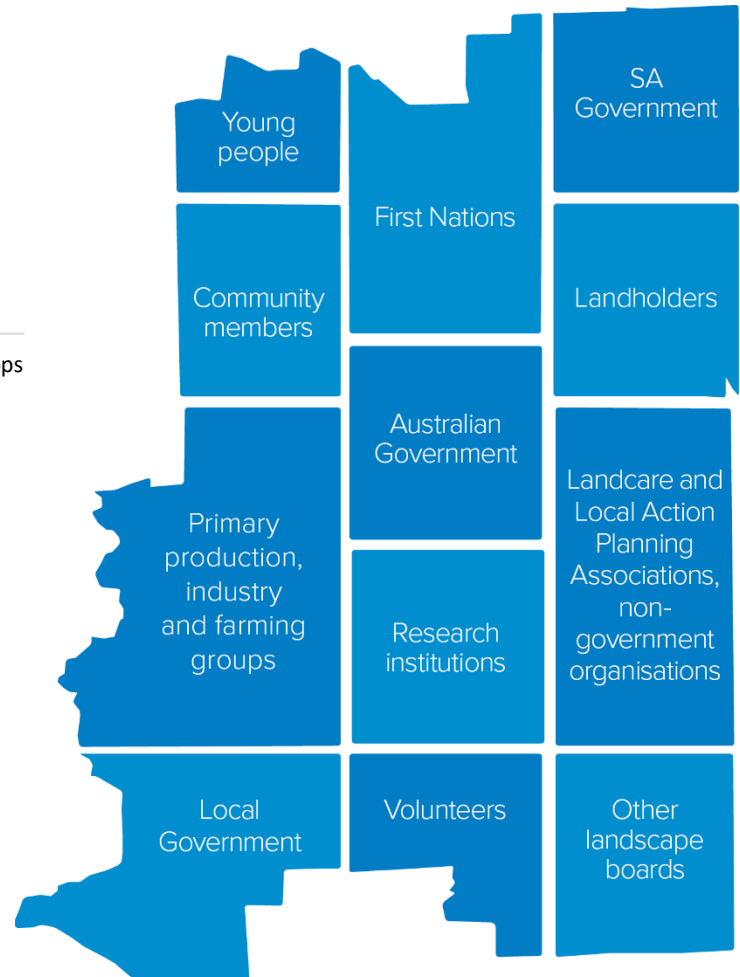
### Type of individuals engaged at events



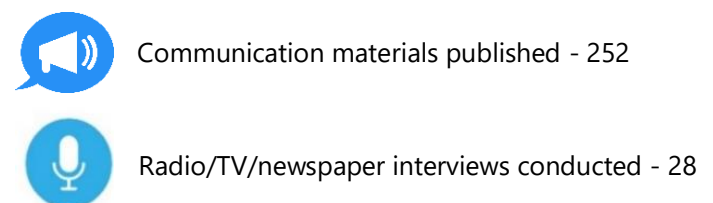
### Split on how Individuals are engaged



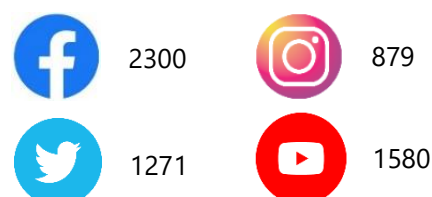
### Key Partnerships



### Traditional media produced



### Followers on social media



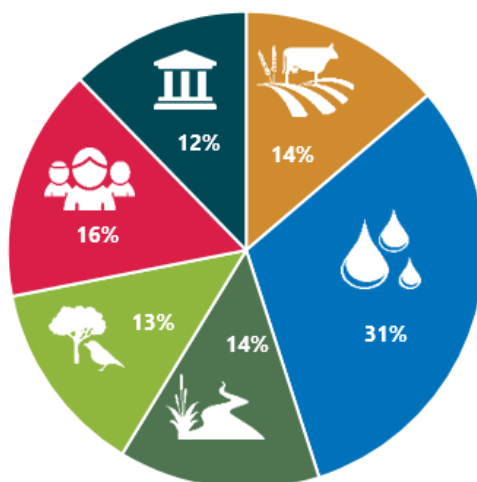
## 5. Financial performance

The following summary of financial performance includes total expenditure by priorities and funding source in addition to expenditure through the disbursement of grant funds. Further detail regarding revenue and planned expenditure can be found in the [2022-2023 Annual Business Plan](#).

**Table 1. Quarter 4 expenditure by priority by funding source.**

Funding source	Annual revenue	Expenditure by priority						Total expenditure YTD
		Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes	Sustainable water Use	Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands	Healthy natural landscapes	People at the heart of landscape management	Foundational programs	
<b>Levy</b>	11,818,167	1,354,987	4,293,467	869,990	975,098	1,908,115	2,085,616	11,487,273
<b>Commonwealth</b>	3,423,870	762,800	870,688	884,919	885,916	730,087	60,536	4,194,947
<b>Other SA Govt Agencies</b>	1,425,495	237,428	364,935	588,148	400,242	87,600	2,031	1,680,385
<b>Other</b>	889,660	92,237	43,263	84,331	87,845	90,501	36,516	434,691
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,557,192</b>	<b>2,447,452</b>	<b>5,572,353</b>	<b>2,427,388</b>	<b>2,349,101</b>	<b>2,816,303</b>	<b>2,184,699</b>	<b>17,797,297</b>

\* The budget and annual revenue in this table may differ to the Business Plan due to additional income being received or carry-over funds.

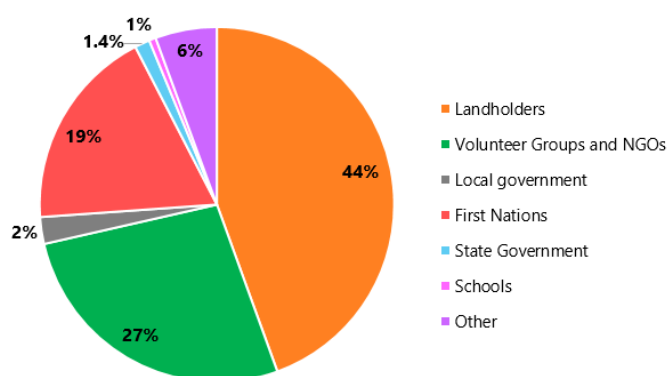


**Figure 1. Percentage of expenditure for the quarter across priorities and foundational support.**

The landscape board provides multiple opportunities for landholders and groups to apply for grants to undertake works to contribute to the implementation of the Landscape Plan. Table 2 and Figure 2 below provide information about the distribution of grant funds into our community.

**Table 2. Grants disbursed by recipient category.**

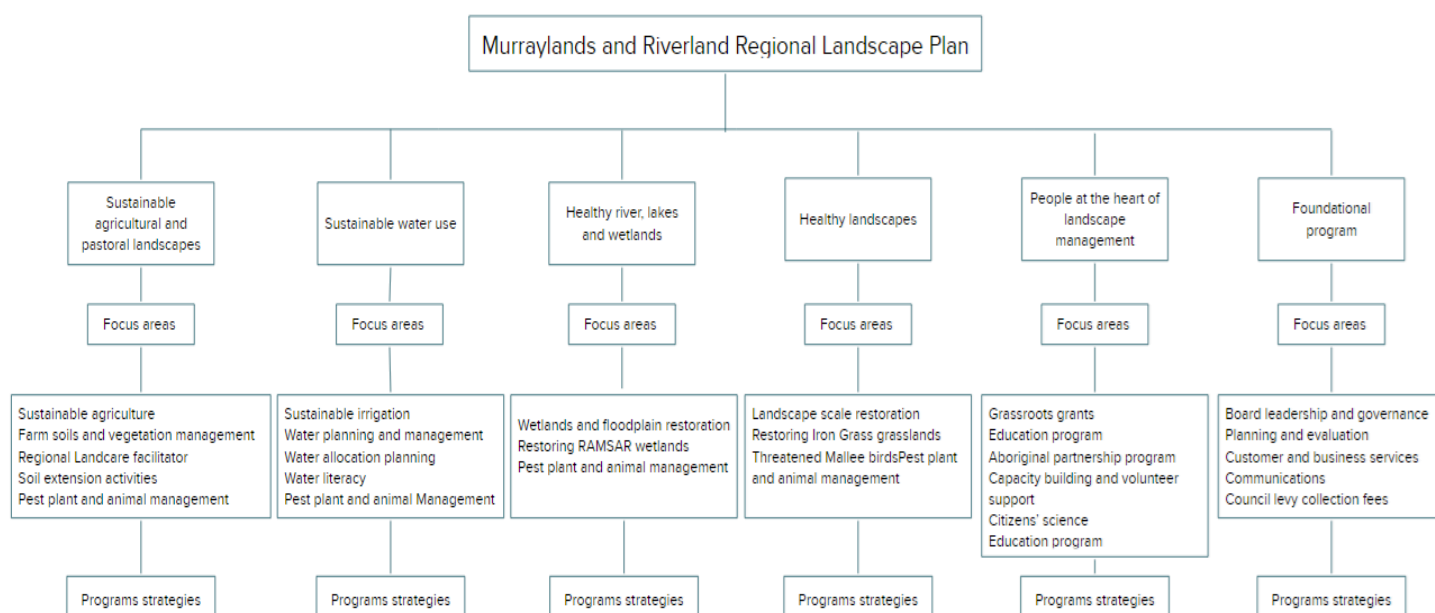
Category	Grants disbursed
Landholders	\$1,254,445
Volunteer Groups and NGOs	\$761,174
Local government	\$68,802
First Nations	\$522,314
State Government	\$38,750
Schools	\$17,450
Other	\$158,490



**Figure 2. Percentage of grants disbursed by recipient category.**

# Appendix 1. Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

The Regional Landscape Plan directs our work by defining the priorities and relevant focus areas for delivery. The diagram and tables below indicate how program delivery is aligned and contributes to the focus areas under each landscape plan priority. (Refer to Appendix 1 for the focus area code).



## Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

Program Focus Areas	Sustainable agriculture	Farms and soils and vegetation management	Regional agriculture Landcare facilitator	Soils extension activities	Pest plant animal management
SA 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SA 2					✓
SA 3		✓			
SA 4		✓			
SA 5				✓	
PP 3			✓		
PP 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	
PP 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	



## Sustainable water use

Program Focus Areas	Water planning and management	Water allocation planning	Water literacy	Sustainable irrigation	Pest plant animal management
SW 1				✓	
SW 2	✓	✓		✓	
SW 3		✓	✓		
SW 4		✓			
SW 5					✓
PP 2		✓			
RW 2		✓			



## Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

Program Focus Areas	Wetland and floodplain restoration	Restoring Ramsar wetlands	Pest plant animal management
RW 1	✓	✓	
RW 2			
RW 3	✓	✓	
RW 4	✓	✓	
RW 5			✓
PP 4		✓	



## Healthy landscapes

Program Focus Areas	Restoring Iron grass grasslands	Landscape Scale Restoration	Threatened Mallee Birds	Pest plant animal management
HL 1		✓	✓	
HL 2			✓	
HL 3	✓	✓		
HL 4	✓	✓		
HL 5		✓	✓	
HL 6				✓
SA 3	✓			
PP 1		✓	✓	
PP 4	✓	✓		
FP 4		✓		



## People at the heart of landscape management

Program Focus Areas	First Nations partnerships	Grassroots Grants	Education Program	Capacity building and volunteer support	Citizen science
PP 1				✓	✓
PP 2	✓			✓	
PP 3			✓	✓	
PP 4		✓		✓	✓
PP 5		✓		✓	
PP 6				✓	✓
FP 3					✓



## Foundational programs

Program Focus Areas	Customer and Business Services	Board leadership and governance	Communications	Planning and evaluation	Council levy collection fees
FP 1				✓	
FP 2				✓	
FP 3	✓		✓	✓	✓
FP 4				✓	
FP 5			✓		
FP 6	✓				
FP 7	✓	✓			
FP 8	✓				
SW 3			✓		

# Appendix 2. Focus Areas for Priorities



## Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

- SA1. Work with industry and farming groups to identify and address soil management issues to improve soil health and build resilience.
- SA2. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity.
- SA3. Promote and support the protection and enhancement of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation as part of a productive system.
- SA4. Promote and demonstrate best management practices to retain ground-cover and reduce erosion risk.
- SA5. Support land managers to build resilience in farming systems through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events.



## Sustainable water use

- SW1. Work with the irrigation industry to optimise water use for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- SW2. Ensure sustainable water use by all water users in a changing climate.
- SW3. Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- SW4. Support water users to build resilience through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events.
- SW5. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity.



## Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

- RW1. Manage and deliver environmental water to build the resilience of targeted wetland and floodplain ecosystems.
- RW2. Actively manage watercourses for improved ecological outcomes in a changing climate.
- RW3. Deliver initiatives that improve conditions for threatened species and culturally significant species.
- RW4. Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- RW5. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species.



## Healthy landscapes

- HL1. Work in partnership to manage total grazing pressure, including from over-abundant native species.
- HL2. Work in partnership to proactively manage fire in the landscape to improve or maintain condition of key ecological and cultural assets.
- HL3. Encourage targeted revegetation and restoration.
- HL4. Ensure future seed availability of native species for revegetation in a changing climate.
- HL5. Improve the level of protection for threatened and culturally significant species and ecological communities.
- HL6. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species.



## People at the heart of landscape management

- PP1. Build and maintain strategic partnerships with, and between, stakeholders for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- PP2. Work in partnership with First Nations to manage the region's landscapes, protect and restore cultural values and assets, and build capacity.
- PP3. Partner with young people, foster their understanding, participation and leadership.
- PP4. Strengthen capacity through increased knowledge, skills and participation.
- PP5. Support community-led landscape management, providing resources to support community projects and practical action.
- PP6. Recognise and encourage volunteers and volunteer community groups and support them to work safely and effectively.



## Foundational programs

- FP1. Develop the regional landscape plan and associated business plans.
- FP2. Implement an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework.
- FP3. Ensure contractual obligations that come with external funding are delivered.
- FP4. Continuously improve the information management systems that support evidence-based decision making.
- FP5. Regular communication of landscape board business.
- FP6. Accurate and timely financial, accounting and budgetary support services which are compliant with Australian Accounting Standards and government financial policies and procedures.
- FP7. Effective and efficient administrative services providing support to staff, the landscape board, and its committees.
- FP8. Maintain staff satisfaction through the management and delivery of human resources policy and programs

## More information

[landscape.sa.gov.au/mr](http://landscape.sa.gov.au/mr)

### Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Offices

Berri

28 Vaughan Terrace

Berri SA 5343

Phone: 08 8580 1800

Murray Bridge

Unit 5-6, Level 1 Sturt Centre

2 Sturt Reserve Road

Murray Bridge SA 5253

Phone: 08 8532 9100



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