

Annual highlights 2024-25

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board





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.

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

In 2024-25, many projects and partnerships delivered great outcomes for the region and contributed to the enhancement and protection of the Murraylands and Riverland landscape. Much of this work was funded by landscape levies, paid by rate payers and water licensees, as well as considerable investment from the South Australian and Australian Governments.

This was the fourth year of the implementation of the 2021-2026 Regional Landscape Plan which focuses the landscape board's work on 5 priority areas: *sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes; sustainable water use; healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands; healthy natural landscapes; and people at the heart of landscape management.*

The landscape board sincerely thanks everyone who has been involved in delivering a healthy and resilient landscape, as the landscape board's achievements have only been possible through strong partnerships with landholders, First Nations, industry, government and non-government organisations, and the wider community.



Our region covers approximately **53,780 km²** and is home to about **73,000 people**



Tourism visitors to our region spend about **\$374m** per year in total

Land use of the region is made up of:



- **30%** conservation and natural environments



- **65.5%** agricultural production



- **4.5%** other (including residential, manufacturing and industrial, mining, water bodies etc.)



There are **3 Ramsar-listed sites** in our region



Grassroots Grants Program
funded **45** projects from
35 community groups



80 volunteers recognised
at celebration **events**



Organised and/or participated
in **396** events to **engage**
with and **support** the
region's **community**



Education program supported
4,862 students and
528 teachers across **241**
events, reaching **111** schools
throughout the year



Improved irrigation
efficiency over **2,200** ha
of land



2,627 interactions with landholders and community members to provide support and technical advice



8 on-ground trial sites were established to increase land managers knowledge of improved land management practices



Revegetation of **22** ha for conservation



Over **33,000 ML** of environmental water delivered to wetlands



More than **13,000** ha of wetlands and floodplains managed to improve or maintain their condition, including 3 Ramsar sites



28 priority terrestrial and aquatic threatened species and/or ecological communities received targeted support



820,723 ha benefitted from **pest animal control** for **conservation**



418,940 ha benefitted from **pest animal control** for **land management** purposes



More than **13,000** ha benefitted from **weed control** for **land management** purposes



More than **10,000** ha of **pest invasion pathways** were **inspected** and **surveyed**

Highlights



We **partnered with 245 individual partner groups** across the region including First Nations, community, industry, land managers/farmers, research institutes and universities, volunteers, local governments, non-government agencies, government agencies and branches.



This year, **7,207 people took part in field days, workshops and events** – gaining practical skills and knowledge to care for their land, water, and the environment. From hands-on demonstrations to community information sessions, these events connect the community with expert advice and local solutions to support more sustainable landscapes.



Volunteers and community members helped to collect valuable data through projects like DirtFest, Turtle Fest, Ngarrindjeri Thukubi (freshwater turtle), Bioblitzes, FrogWatch SA and iSPYthon. Their efforts are building a richer picture of our region's biodiversity and supporting on-ground conservation.



Launching in December 2024, the **'Soil Your Undies' program demonstrated the role of soil microbes in improving soil health**. One hundred and forty-nine pairs of undies were buried and dug up by farmers, gardeners, kindy children and others, to see how microbes degraded the cotton. Results were used to generate tips on how to improve soil health.



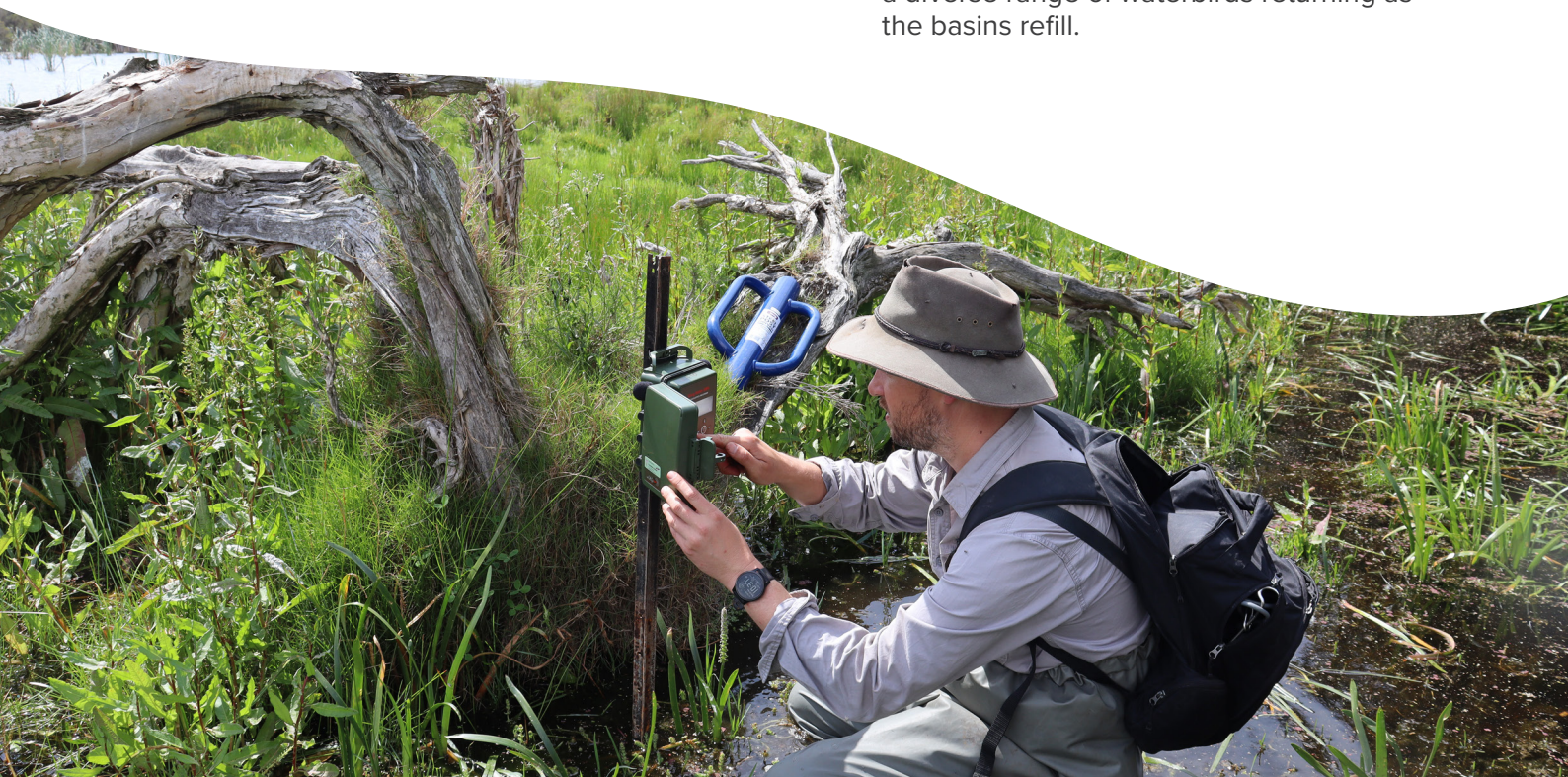
The **CSIRO National Soil Monitoring Program** commenced and **identified 62 sites for sampling** in the Murraylands and Riverland region. This program will provide vital data on soil health and guide future land management.



For the first time in 50 years, the threatened **Murray crayfish was captured in the River Murray!** In 2024-25, 450 were released through a breeding program with Nature Glenelg Trust and NSW Fisheries. A survey in August 2024 confirmed their comeback, with 12 recaptured – including 3 females carrying eggs. The project is ongoing, and further releases are planned in 2025-26.



New water management infrastructure was completed to deliver environmental water to the Teringie Wetland Complex. The project has already been a success, with a diverse range of waterbirds returning as the basins refill.



Highlights



This year, the landscape board **delivered the largest environmental watering program in the region**. Fifteen and a half gigalitres of environmental water was delivered across 2,088 ha of wetlands - enough to fill nearly 6,800 Olympic-sized swimming pools. This historic effort provided vital support to more wetlands and native species than ever before.



Through the **Call of the Mallee project**, the landscape board has continued **working with Living Landscapes partners on the South Olary Plain to protect threatened mallee bird habitat**. By removing pastoral dams, the project reduces grazing pressure and restores natural water flows across the landscape. This year, 2 dams were closed near the northern boundary of the Dangali Wilderness Protection Area.



The landscape board continued its collaboration with the **One Basin Cooperative Research Centre**, including support for the **'Putting People at the Centre' project**. This work involves partnering with irrigators to develop decision-making tools that will help guide long-term climate adaptation strategies.



The **Marne Saunders Report Card** was released, bringing together data from government agencies, citizen science projects and the local community, to **show how the catchment is tracking against a range of health indicators**. More than 50 people attended the report card launch event, highlighting strong community interest in the catchment's health.



River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (**RMMAC**) rangers undertook **specialist tree climbing training**, enabling them to play an important role in the landscape board's **regent parrot nest monitoring program**. By checking nesting hollows high in river red gums along the River Murray, the rangers are helping to monitor this threatened species while strengthening their own capabilities for future work conservation.



The landscape board partnered with RMMAC and SA Drought Hub to deliver a series of **Climate Change Yarning Circles in the Riverland**. These events brought community members together to learn about climate change, discuss likely impacts on cultural values, and explore possible actions. This approach has attracted strong interest from other regions as a powerful way of partnering with and empowering First Nations communities to respond to the impacts of climate change.



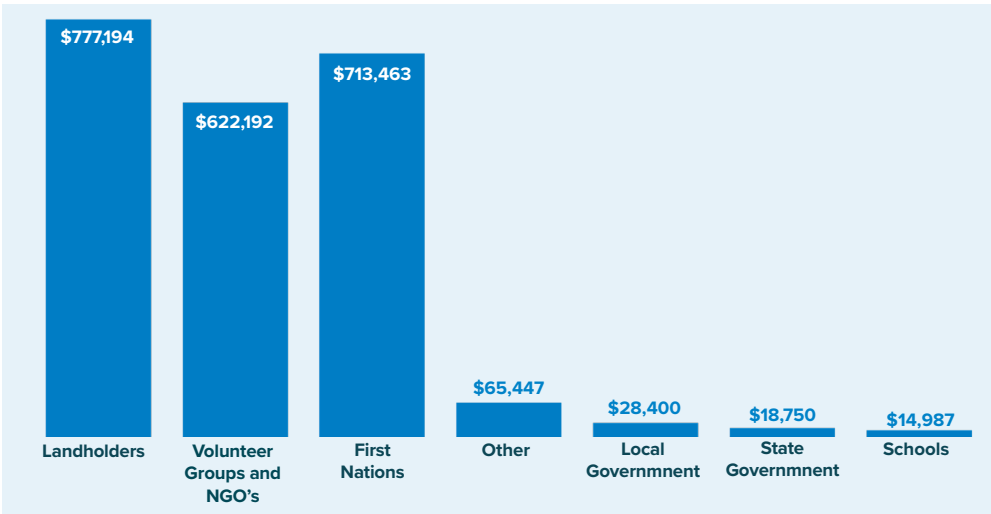
Investment in the region

Landscape levies play an important role in helping to secure our 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 paying landscape levies is a way that everyone can contribute.

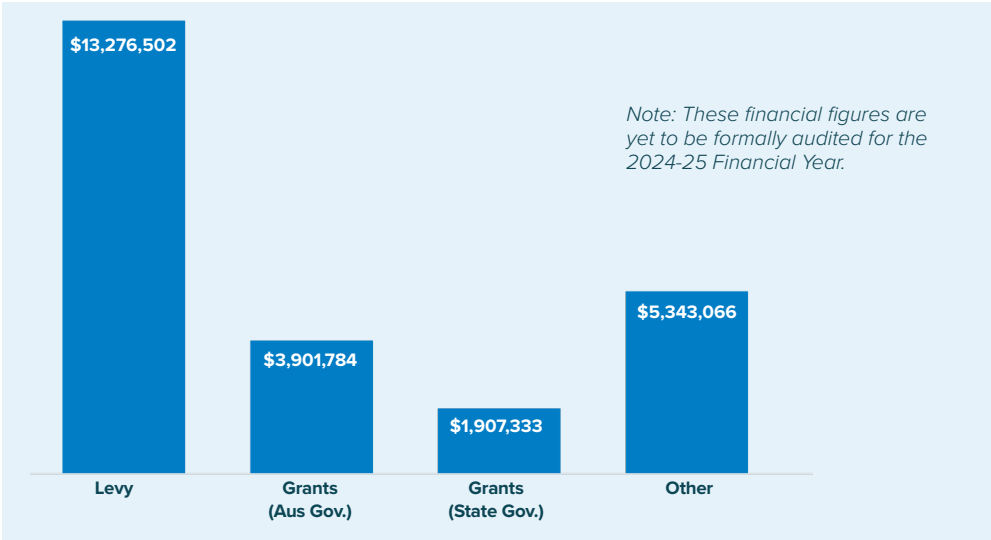
Funds raised within this landscape region remain invested here and are used for a variety of regional priorities including managing land, vegetation and water; citizen science; and community education and awareness. The landscape levies are used to leverage other funding sources including from the Australian Government.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the amount raised from landscape levies was approximately \$13.3 million. Over \$11.1 million was raised through other funding sources.

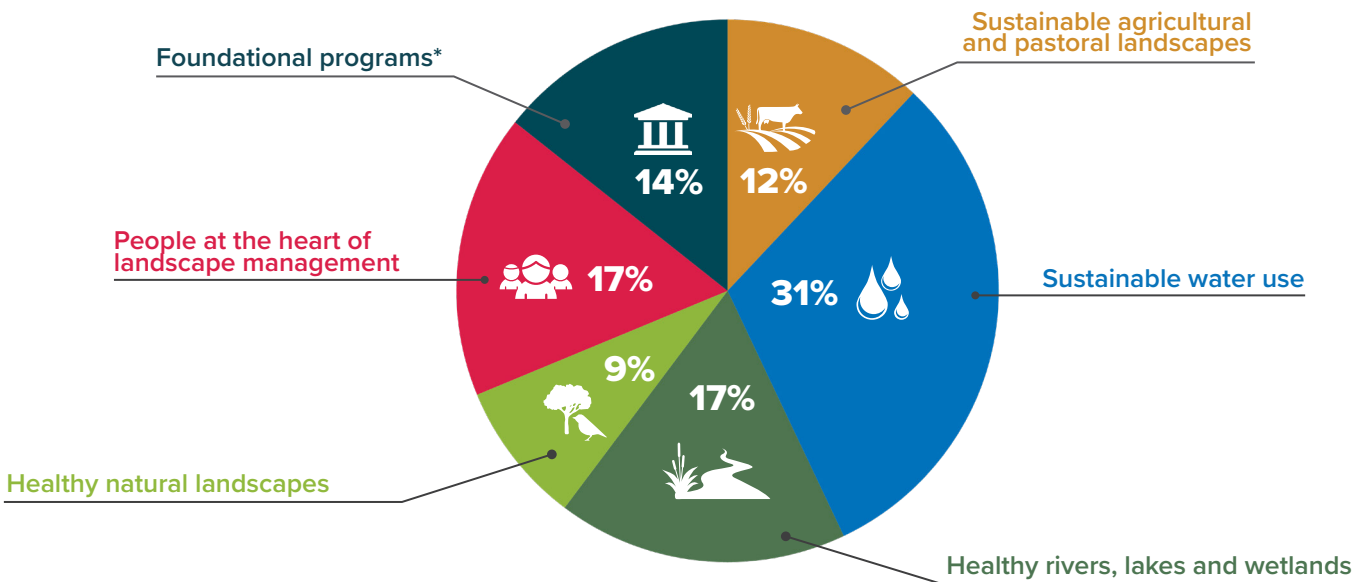
Support provided to the community



2024-25 revenue



Expenditure by regional priorities



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

More information

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