

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Performance Report Highlights

Quarter 2 | October - December 2025

Outcomes aligned with the 2025-26 annual business plan investment and priorities



From the General Manager

I am proud to present this report, which summarises the landscape board's activities and performance over the past 3 months and tracks our progress towards delivering the 5-year regional landscape plan and the annual business plan.

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

This report is one of the organisation's primary 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.

Bryan McDonald
General Manager

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.

QUARTER AT A GLANCE

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



534,508 ha benefitted from **pest animal control**



7 on-ground trial sites have been established or maintain



3,639 ha benefitted from **pest weed control**



244 communication materials published



13,000 ha of wetlands and surrounding floodplains managed



5,876 followers on social media



Area surveyed

24,016 ha for land management

34,280 ha for threatened species recovery



7 Radio, TV and newspaper interviews conducted



Engaging with **1,535 people** at **102 events**



113 schools supported and **34 schools** actively involved in the education program



497 interactions with landholders and community members to provide support and technical advice



41 referrals responded to by landscape board staff



4 compliance issues investigated

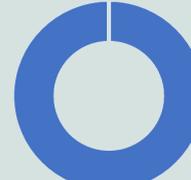
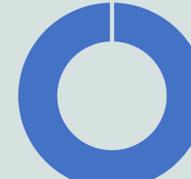
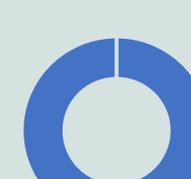
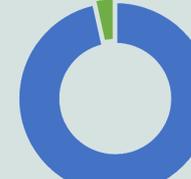


8 WAA permits received and processed

QUARTER AT A GLANCE



In quarter 2 of 2025-26, the following progress was made, and program delivery is predominantly **on track** for the financial year.

Strategic Priority	Annual Business Plan Programs	Program Strategies
Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes	Sustainable agriculture Carbon farming outreach program Pest plant and animal management	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (10)
Sustainable water use	Sustainable irrigation Water planning and management Water allocation planning Pest plant and animal management	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (12) Postponed (1) Not started (1) Behind schedule (4)
Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands	Wetlands and floodplain restoration Pest plant and animal management	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (9)
Healthy natural landscapes	Landscape scale restoration Mallee birds TEC Restoring iron grass grasslands Pest plant and animal management	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (22)
People at the heart of landscape management	Grassroots grants Education program First Nations partnership program Community partnerships and engagement Citizen science	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (20)
Foundational programs	Board leadership and governance Planning and evaluation Customer and business services Communications Council levy collection fees	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (28) Completed (1)

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

- Extreme heat provided the opportunity to collect data at the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) demonstration sites that shows the effectiveness of the orchard cooling practices being trialled under conditions that are predicted to become more frequent in the future due to climate change (Photo 1).

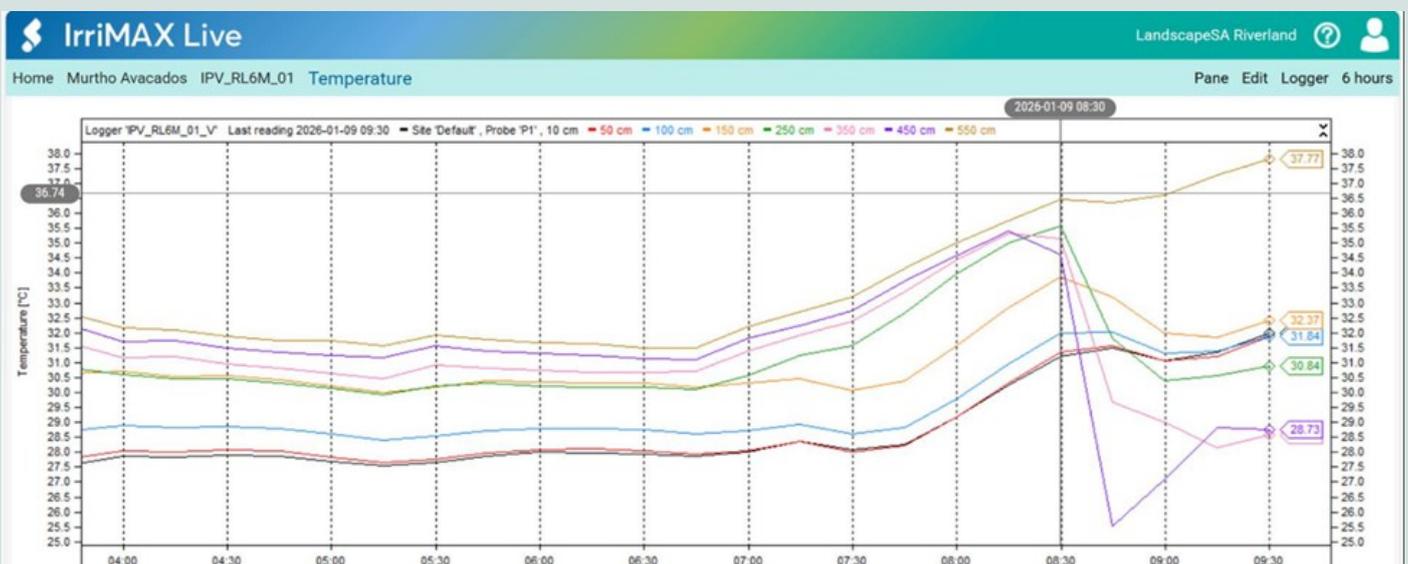


Photo 1: Influence of cooling irrigation on avocado canopy temperatures during heatwave. Note brown trace (550cm) sites above the influence of the cooling irrigation system.

- Landholder engagement was undertaken through the National Soil Monitoring Program to facilitate commencement of soil sampling activities.
- A workshop was held in Loxton as part of the One Basin Cooperative Research Centre (One Basin CRC) new 'Decarbonising Basin Irrigation Regions', led by the Renmark Irrigation Trust and University of Melbourne, where the Land and Water team showcased our work on the CSA and Carbon Farming Outreach Program (CFOP) projects (Photo 2).



Photo 2: Participants at the One Basin CRCs 'Decarbonising Basin Irrigation Regions' workshop

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Sustainable water use

- All science and technical investigation projects were completed for the Marne Saunders Water Allocation Plan review.
- Productive on country meetings were held with Peramangk Aboriginal Corporation (PAC) and Mid Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (MMAC) regarding the Marne Saunders WAP update.
- A new climate module under the Almond Hort360 platform is being developed through collaboration with the Almond Board Australia and the Bureau of Meteorology. The module is an online best management practice portal that allows growers to assess their operations and compare to others in the industry. Resources will be linked within the new module to outputs being developed through the One Basin CRC's 'Putting People at the Centre' project.



Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

- The largest watering schedule the landscape board has ever negotiated was finalised for the 2025-26 Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) Environmental Watering Schedule, topping last year's program of 17,000 ML. Just over 24,000 ML of CEWH environmental water (E-water) will be delivered to 62 sites across 38 wetland and floodplain complexes, with approximately 950 ML of return flows to the River Murray.
- After a 5-year design and construction program, the new regulator at Bookmark Creek was opened (Photo 3). This will allow for flows of up to 400 ML per day to be directed through the Bookmark anabranch, approximately 20 times more than has been possible over recent decades, ensuring the waterway can serve as suitable habitat for Murray cod, golden perch and potentially allow for the reintroduction of Murray crayfish.



Photo 3: The new Bookmark Creek Regulator - looking upstream towards Jane Eliza wetland

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands



Photo 4: Conditions at the Murth-Wiela Wetland Complex

- Southern bell frogs are thriving in ideal breeding conditions in the Murtho-Wiela Wetland Complex. During a recent survey, 5 young southern bell frogs were collected, a significant finding as monitoring teams normally only find one or 2 in a net at a time. This demonstrates the significant ecological benefits of supporting the natural wetting and drying phases of a hydrological cycle.

- Several field trips and events were conducted with First Nations groups to engage in E-water planning, and demonstrations of site management infrastructure and monitoring programs. First Nations groups included the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) Junior Ranger's team (Photo 6), Elders and the new Working on Country Ranger Team, all from Meningie, and the NAC Raukkan-based Working on Country Ranger Team (Photo 7).



Photo 5: Five young Southern bell frog found during monitoring at Murtho-Wiela Wetland Complex



Photo 6: NAC Junior Ranger's team from Meningie at the Ter-
ingie Wetland Complex



Photo 7: NAC Raukkan-based Working on Country Ranger
Team Country involved in bird surveys and other monitoring
activities at the Yaiwaiparrung Wetland Complex

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Healthy natural landscapes

- Mapping the condition class of Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland (INTG) between Palmer and Peterborough was undertaken in collaboration with the Northern Yorke Landscape Board. Over 17,000 hectares was mapped across both regions, with over 5,500 hectares within the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board region, of which around 1,800 hectares fell into the protected condition classes A and B (formally protected under legislation), and around 2,800 hectares were considered class C (holds potential for restoration or not INTG at all).
- Two conservation detection dogs were deployed on 3 sites to survey for Murray-darling carpet pythons. Both dogs independently alerted at a tree hollow at Murtho, and while follow-up investigations using a scope and camera were unable to confirm the presence of a python, the consistent trained alert responses were pleasing (Photo 8).



Photo 8: Using conservation detection dogs to detect Murray-darling carpet pythons



Photo 9: Vegetation where a SGW was located which was burnt in a prescribed burn 10 years ago

- Recent surveys for Mallee striated grasswren (SGW) in the Living Landscape project area found SGW in *Triodia* mallee vegetation regenerating from bushfires that occurred over 10 years ago. This quarter, surveys were extended in Danggali Conservation Park and Wilderness Protection Area, focusing on areas previously managed by prescribed burns. SGW were again found occupying *Triodia* habitat at 10+ years after a prescribed burn indicating that a similar habitat transition initiated by naturally occurring fire has been achieved using a human-instigated burn. This suggests another tool to assist in the conservation of this species (Photo 9).
- Regent parrot nestling checks were undertaken as part of a long-term breeding-season monitoring. The landscape board, supported by volunteers, located and visited 83 nests with support from the Australian National University (ANU). Cameras were deployed on 33 nests, health and fitness data was collected on 31 nestlings, and 9 tracking devices were deployed by ANU on adult breeding regent parrots.

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



People at the heart of landscape management

- Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) members worked alongside the landscape board to translocate the critically endangered native fish species the southern purple-spotted gudgeon from a surrogate site in Murray Bridge to Monarto Safari Park as part of the 'Building the resilience of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe' project.
- The River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) junior rangers were supported with a day trip to Chowilla and Lock 6. Students explored local waterways at Chowilla, handled and studied native wildlife and learned about wetland monitoring, the importance of environmental water and the natural wetting and drying cycles that keep these systems healthy. At Lock 6 students learned about management of the River Murray's lock system and how water levels are carefully controlled to support navigation, water supply and the environment (Photo 10).



Photo 10: RMMAC Junior Ranges at Chowilla

- River Murray Youth Council (RMYC) students attended local monitoring events for fish, frogs, tadpoles and birds, gaining practical field and project skills while providing valuable observation and scribing support to ecologists.



Photo 11: Riverland students attending the 'Turtles of the River' YEL event at Lake Bonney

- Riverland students attended Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) 'turtles of the river' event held at Baramera Lake. Students spent the day hearing from experts, searching for nests, participating in environmental art workshops and meeting baby turtles (Photo 11).

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



People at the heart of landscape management

- Murraylands students attended a YEL event to learn about plants and biodiversity. Students heard about threats to flora and biodiversity loss across the region, and about actions they can take to support species survival. Students also learned about seed collection, and were able to explore different seed features and types before helping propagate plants for the 2026 Precious Plants program (Photo 12).
- More than 600 students participated in more than thirty separate education sessions and excursions across. Topics included soil microbes, habitat building, native and introduced fish, landscape and conservation careers, turtles, floodplains and wetlands, and cultural and ecological values.
- Citizen Science volunteers visited Peebinga to monitor malleefowl. Nineteen mounds were identified, 3 of which were active, with one malleefowl spotted working a mound (Photo 13).



Photo 12: Murraylands students attending a YEL event about plants and biodiversity



Photo 13: Malleefowl monitoring volunteers



Photo 14: Marne Saunders Waterbug Bioblitz data collection

- The Marne Saunders Waterbug bioblitz attracted a strong turnout of First Nations participants, landholders, volunteers, freshwater ecologists, and landscape board and DEW staff. The data collected at these events forms the basis for 2 of the indicators in the Marne Saunders Report Card, which is on track for delivery in early 2026 (Photo 14).

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Foundational programs

- The Woody Meadow trial was officially launched in Murray Bridge. The event was attended by staff and elected members from the Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB), and landscape board members and staff. Participants showed strong interest and support for the trial, contributing thoughtful reflections and enthusiasm (Photo 15).



Photo 15: Woody Meadows project launch event

- The draft 2026-2031 Regional Landscape Plan was finalised and approved by the Board for public consultation (Photo 16). A link to the consultation webpage is provided [here](#).



Photo 16: Draft 2026-2031 Regional Landscape Plan

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Pest plant and animal control

- A community facing online platform was developed for the 'River to Recovery' project and promoted through signage installed at boat ramps, ferries and popular recreational river front locations. The platform encourages community members to report the sighting of priority declared species within the flood footprint along the River Murray (Photo 17).
- Many stakeholders were engaged for weed and pest survey and control works in and along the River Murray corridor as part of the 'River to Recovery' project.



Photo 17: River to recovery corflute signage



Photo 18: NAC workshop participants at the 'River to Recovery' workshop

- A workshop was coordinated with NAC through the 'River to Recovery' project to upskill community members on rabbit control options and weed spray techniques. Two back-pack spray units were provided to NAC to enable them to continue with control works (Photo 18).
- Goat yards were provided to a property near Swan Reach conservation park to assist PIRSA, RSPCA, and local landholders with the removal of goats that had been escaping into the park and neighbouring properties.
- Gorse samples were collected and sent to Agriculture Victoria for genetic testing as part of the national Gorse biocontrol project. This will enable future development of gorse biocontrol's targeting specific genetic strains that are relevant to our region.

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



Pest plant and animal control

- Through the Riverland feral pig project staff have been working with a local landholder to build skills and knowledge to effectively trap feral pigs. The landholder is now independently managing a remotely operated feral pig trap to consistently remove large numbers of pigs from the landscape. To increase the availability of this technology for the community, staff successfully built their own control box and engaged a local fabricator to manufacture a trap panel, reducing the cost of an entire trap set up by half, making it much more cost effective (Photo 20).



Photo 19: A feral pig sitting next to a bait box



Photo 20: A locally fabricated pig trap panel used with a 'home-made' control box



Photo 21: Mixing 1080 oats

- Summer weed inspections and management commenced across the region, despite a slow and dry start to the season. District staff have been surveying roadsides and known infestation areas and have been proactive in engaging with local councils and landholders regarding effective weed management.
- Ripping of rabbit warrens commenced as part of PIRSA's drought funding rabbit control program. District teams have been providing significant volumes of 1080 oats bait to landholders as part of this program (Photo 21).

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. More detail regarding revenue and planned expenditure is available in the [2025-26 Annual Business Plan](#).

Table 1. Quarter 2 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	
Levy	13,852,488	836,380	2,240,495	628,559	495,080	1,202,639	1,216,800	6,619,952
Commonwealth	2,720,357	264,891	156,624	537,596	134,459	355,054	-	1,448,623
Other SA Govt Agencies	1,131,203	67,225	27,634	327,821	39,376	187,901	13,817	663,775
Other**	759,007	116,410	145,611	41,599	30,402	67,754	82,135	483,910
Total	18,463,055	1,284,905	2,570,364	1,535,574	699,317	1,813,347	1,312,752	9,216,260

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

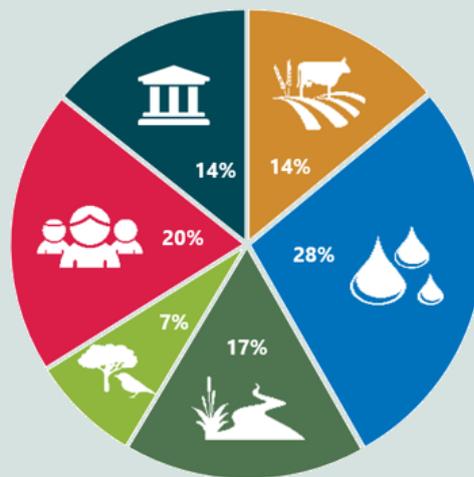
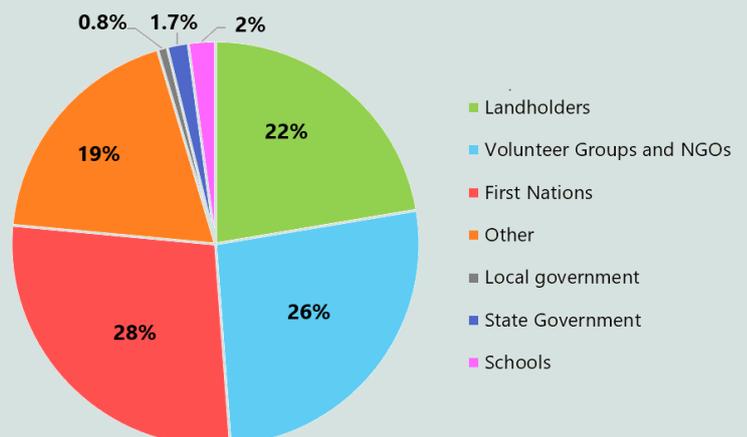


Figure 1. Percentage of expenditure for the quarter across priorities and foundational support.

The landscape board provides multiple opportunities for landholders and groups to apply for grants to undertake works that to contribute to the implementation of the Regional 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	251,243
Volunteer Groups and NGOs	297,968
First Nations	310,932
Local government	8,743
State Government	18,750
Schools	24,013
Other	213,009



[View the full report here](#)

More information

landscape.sa.gov.au/mr

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