

# Managing South Australia's Landscapes

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## 1. What is new in the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act)* in comparison to the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*?

The new Act was created after extensive consultation with industry, stakeholders and communities across our state to enable the establishment of new landscape boards with greater autonomy for how natural resources are managed in their regions.

Eight new regional landscape boards will operate at arm's length from government to deliver simple, effective and clear priorities to empower local communities to be responsible for sustainably managing their regions' natural resources.

The regional landscape boards will administer the new Act, including a new metropolitan board Green Adelaide.

These legislative changes aim to deliver a stronger, back-to-basics system with an emphasis on effective water management, pest plant and animal control, soil and land management.

Key elements of the Act include:

- All land and water levies will be capped by the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- From 2022, communities and landholders will be empowered to elect three of the seven new members of the regional landscape boards
- Support for regional communities and traditional owners to be actively involved in landscape management programs and initiatives
- A Grassroots Grants program in each region, including Green Adelaide, to support volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to undertake local projects
- Levy money collected in Adelaide being spent on a new Landscape Priorities Fund to invest in large landscape scale projects in regions.

## 2. What are the benefits of the changes?

The key benefits that are expected to flow to regional communities as a result of the new Act, include:

- **Eight regional landscape boards** – with greater autonomy and flexibility to respond to local issues, including managing their own budgets and staff.
- **Green Adelaide** – a new and innovative organisation charged with transforming Adelaide into a world-leading, sustainable, green and climate resilient city.
- **Simpler regional plans** – with five priorities that are easy to understand.
- **Greater community representation** – with three out of seven boards members to be elected from 2022 (except for the specialist board Green Adelaide and the Alinytjara Wilurara board, which is already represented by select regional leaders).
- **State Landscape Strategy** – to improve coordination between regional and state priorities.
- **Landscape Priorities Fund** – with levies collected in Adelaide being spent in regions to support larger statewide management issues, such as bushfire recovery, drought and agricultural resilience.
- **Stronger focus on climate resilience and biodiversity** – to support the development of resilient landscapes and sustainable primary production.
- **Grassroots Grants program** – with greater opportunities for volunteers and local community organisations.
- **Less red tape and simplified compliance** – to enable boards to get the job done more easily.
- **Land and water levies capped**
- **Stronger partnerships with landholders and Aboriginal communities** – to ensure that the knowledge of our regional

communities and First Nations is respected, recognised and used in the management of our landscapes.

### **3. When does the new Act officially replace the NRM Act and the new boards start operating?**

The new Act replaced the NRM Act on 1 July 2020.

New landscape boards have been established and NRM board membership has ceased.

New regional management boundaries for landscape boards, including Green Adelaide were proclaimed on Thursday 19 December 2019. Boundaries can be viewed as interactive maps via [www.landscape.sa.gov.au](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au)

Landscape board chairs were appointed on 11 February 2020 to lead each of the new boards by the Minister for Environment and Water.

Current members of the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) NRM Board, all of whom are respected leaders from across the AW region, remain as members of the AW NRM Board, and have also been appointed as members of the AW Landscape Board. This is in recognition of their current leadership role and standing in the community.

With the exception of the AW Landscape Board and Green Adelaide, a process to appoint the remaining board members was finalised in June 2020. For more information and to see who has been appointed for each board, visit [www.landscape.sa.gov.au](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au)

Green Adelaide board members were appointed in late June 2020.

### **4. Will there be any changes in how the public will be able to access advice, support or programs?**

The new landscape boards will continue to deliver services to and partner with regional communities.

Communities will be kept up-to-date on any changes by the new regional landscape

boards. To stay informed, sign up to receive updates via the website

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

### **5. How do I know if my regional boundaries have changed? How can I find out which landscape board supports my region?**

From 1 July 2020, nine landscape regions replaced eight NRM regions. These changes mean that landowners who were in the following NRM regions may now reside in a different regional boundary:

- Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
- Northern and Yorke region
- South Australian Murray-Darling Basin.

The current Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region is now divided into three regions:

- Green Adelaide
- Hills and Fleurieu
- Northern and Yorke.

The Green Adelaide region encompasses metropolitan Adelaide from Aldinga in the south to the Gawler River in the north.

The new Hills and Fleurieu region extends from Cape Jervis to north of Birdwood and incorporate Mount Barker and Strathalbyn down to Goolwa.

Northern areas of the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Region, including Gawler and Mallala, now form part of the Northern and Yorke landscape region.

The Northern and Yorke landscape region also includes the areas around Burra, Springton and Mount Pleasant, which was previously located in the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM Region.

Port Augusta and the Flinders Ranges council areas now form part of the South Australian Arid Lands landscape region rather than Northern and Yorke.

Find out which landscape board supports your region by visiting [www.landscape.sa.gov.au](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au)

## 6. How will the boards operate at 'arm's length' from government?

As part of the changes, landscape boards will be able to approve their own budgets as part of their business plan each year, unless the budget includes a change to levy arrangements or the business plan is inconsistent with the board's regional landscape plan.

Boards will have greater autonomy over staffing arrangements and a General Manager will be appointed to employ staff and manage day-to-day operations.

## 7. Why are board elections being postponed until 2022 and not commencing with the establishment of the new landscape boards?

Under the new Act, the first elections will be held in 2022. This will align with the next local government elections to help achieve efficiencies in running the elections.

Until then board members have been appointed by the Minister for Environment and Water.

From 2022, in regions where elections are to be held, communities and landholders will be able to take part in an election process to elect three of the seven new members of the regional landscape boards. The Minister will appoint four of the seven new members.

Green Adelaide will be governed by a board of up to eight highly skilled experts, appointed by the Minister for Environment and Water.

## 8. What does the new Act mean for Aboriginal communities?

Supporting the interests of Aboriginal people is included in the objects of the Act for the first time and will underpin decisions made by the Minister and regional landscape boards.

The significance of landscapes to Aboriginal people is expressly recognised as a principle in the Act, with each landscape board being

required to work collaboratively with the Aboriginal communities in their region.

Aboriginal knowledge is expressly recognised in the Act as an important contribution in helping to achieve sustainable landscape management.

The Landscape Priorities Fund and the Grassroots Grants program, as well as the overall focus of the reform to deliver outcomes through partnerships, will together provide funding opportunities for Aboriginal people and groups to drive positive and practical improvements to landscape management.

## 9. What regulations underpin the new Act?

The regulations that underpin the new *Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act)* commenced operations on 1 July 2020, these include:

- *Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020*
- *Landscape South Australia (Water Management) Regulations 2020*
- *Landscape South Australia (Fees) Notice 2020.*

Current NRM regulations still required under the new Act have been included in the new regulations with some operational improvements which aim to create a simpler and more accessible system. Other minor updates have also been made to ensure consistency with the new Act.

## 10. What is the role of a landscape board?

Landscape boards are responsible for facilitating the management of landscapes in partnership with key partners and stakeholders.

They administer the Act and support all sectors of the community, and all levels of government, by providing strategic leadership for their region's landscape management

priorities with a focus on land, water, pests and biodiversity.

Landscape boards are statutory bodies and instruments of the Crown, accountable to, and subject to the direction of, the Minister for Environment and Water.

## 11. Who are the chairs of the landscape boards?

The following appointments have been made:

- Alinytjara Wilurara, Parry Aguis
- Eyre Peninsula, Mark Whitfield
- Hills & Fleurieu, David Greenhough
- Kangaroo Island, Andrew Heinrich
- Limestone Coast, Dr Kerry DeGaris
- Murraylands and Riverland, Di Davidson
- Northern & Yorke, Caroline Schaefer
- SA Arid Lands, Ross Sawers

## 12. What is the role of the chair?

The chair plays a crucial role in leading the board in delivering a stronger, back-to-basics system with an emphasis on effective water management, pest plant and animal control, soil and land management and biodiversity.

## 13. Who are the members of the Green Adelaide Board and what is its role?

Chris Daniels has been appointed as the Chair, with Dr Felicity-ann Lewis deputy chair and a further seven board members.

The Board will also be responsible for integrating the management of water resources and wetlands; the metropolitan coastline; nature education within the city; creating habitat for biodiversity; and the greening of streets, parklands and buildings.

This includes exploring world-wide initiatives relevant to urban ecology and green cities, and the option of Adelaide becoming a globally recognised National Park City.

Board members include:

- Professor Chris Daniels (chair)
- Dr Felicity-ann Lewis (deputy chair)
- Claire Boan
- Jeffrey Newchurch
- Louka Parry
- Adrian Skull
- Trixie Smith
- Kelvin Trimper
- Dena Vassallo

For more information:

[www.environment.sa.gov.au/green-adelaide](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/green-adelaide)

## 14. What sort of skills are required to be a board member?

Landscape board members are experienced and respected community leaders, often with established networks with relevant stakeholders and partners.

Collectively, an effective board will need a broad range of skills, experience and knowledge in areas relating to the effective operation of organisations, and the practical issues of community-based landscape management.

Board members are appointed for their skills, knowledge and experience, as opposed to organisations or communities that they may otherwise represent.

Candidates ideally live locally in the region, however candidates who live elsewhere with a deep understanding of the region's landscape management may also be considered.

Membership on the board aims to reflect the region's diversity in culture, gender, experience, skills and age. For more information visit [www.landscape.sa.gov.au](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au)

## 15. Will landscape board members be provided with training?

A comprehensive board induction program is being delivered to each board over the coming months.

## 16. What happens to the current NRM Board business plans?

NRM Board business plans concluded on 30 June 2020.

New Landscape Board business plans for 2020-2021 that factor in CPI cap on levies, reform principles, Grassroots Grants and the Landscapes Priority Fund (for Green Adelaide & AMLR) have been endorsed by the new landscape boards.

The State Landscape Strategy and Regional Landscape Plan will be developed in 2020/21.

## 17. Do I still need to pay an NRM levy?

Yes, but it has been renamed. Council rates notices for 2020/21 will instead include a landscape levy charge (previously known as the NRM levy). It is paid by all ratepayers across South Australia – recognising that all landowners play a central role in enjoying, protecting and managing our state's landscapes.

It is not a new charge, but it has been renamed and improved to help fund the operations of the state's regional landscape boards (previously known as NRM boards) who are responsible for facilitating the management of South Australia's landscapes.

Your council is required to collect the landscape levy on behalf of your local landscape board, in accordance with the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. The board pays the Council a collection fee each year for providing this service.

## 18. What is the levy used for?

The levy is collected by the Council, but raised by regional landscape boards to fund programs that support the region as outlined in its annual Business Plan, with an emphasis on land and water management, pest animal and plant control, and biodiversity.

These services help to support local communities and landowners to be directly responsible for managing their region's landscapes, including greater funding and partnership opportunities to deliver on ground works and projects.

The landscape levy is placed on all rateable land, and the water levy on all water licences and allocations.

## 19. What are the benefits of the levy changes?

Under the new Act, the following improvements have been made to the levy system:

- All landscape and water levies now capped by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Greater transparency of where your levy is spent – landscape boards have to publically outline in its budget how levies are being spent.
- More funding opportunities for communities – a small percentage of the landscape and water levies in each region goes towards a Grassroots Grants Program to support community and volunteer groups to play a significant role in managing our natural resources, including carrying out on-ground works.

- Part of the levies raised in the metropolitan Green Adelaide region goes towards a Landscape Priorities Fund – to enable regional landscape boards to partner with councils, community groups and other organisations and invest in larger landscape issues for our state, such as bushfire recovery.

For more information about the landscape levy visit your local landscape board website at [www.landscape.sa.gov.au](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au)

## **20. Why has my levy increased this year when it's meant to be capped at CPI?**

Landscape levies have been capped by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), however some levies may be higher as a result of an increase in property values in some Council areas. This is due to the CPI cap being applied at a regional level by boards, and then shared across council areas. Where property values in some council areas increase more than those in other council areas, those areas will be responsible for a higher share of the overall levy in the region.

## **21. What if I can't afford to pay the levy?**

If you are under financial difficulty please contact your Council as early as possible to discuss alternative payment arrangements.