Northern and Yorke Landscape Board

Achievements 2022–2023

Caring for land, water and nature







Service Constitue & a first





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Scan QR code to access resources and read more online

Acknowledgement of Country

The Kaurna, Narungga, Ngadjuri, Nukunu and Peramangk people are the Traditional Custodians of the Northern and Yorke region. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the deep spiritual relationship that Aboriginal people have to Country and the ongoing contribution they make to this region.

Introduction

Working with the local community, the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board cares for our region's land, water and nature.

It is one of 9 landscape boards across South Australia that delivers and supports on-ground programs to sustainably manage our natural resources.

The Northern and Yorke region is a productive part of the state, with 80% cropping and grazing land. It's also a region to enjoy and explore beaches, bushland, mountain ranges and renowned wine-producing areas.

With funding from the landscape levy, the Australian Government and conservation organisations, the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board ensures these precious landscapes are valued and protected into the future.

We're pleased to feature some of the achievements of the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board during 2022-2023.

New Board members

Six new members joined the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board in early 2023.

We welcomed Russell Johnstone, Erika Lawley, Jenny Loftes, Bruce Michael, Sue Scarman and Adrian Shackley, who join existing members Peter Angus, Sam Germein and newly-appointed Chair Geoff White.

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board General Manager Tony Fox paid tribute to our outgoing members, including former Chair Caroline Schaefer, Sarah Barrett, Phillip Heaslip and Maree Wauchope, who all made substantial contributions and advocated strongly for their local communities.











About **150,000 people** live in the **Northern and Yorke region**

Total region spans **38,500km²**



Major centres: Balaklava, Burra, Clare, Gawler, Kadina, Nuriootpa, Orroroo, Peterborough, Port Pirie



About 80% of the region

is under agricultural cropping and grazing production, contributing a quarter of South Australia's agricultural earnings.

Other industries:

Wine production in the Clare Valley and Barossa Valley, mining and mineral processing, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, horticulture and tourism.





coastline

Average annual rainfall of 250-600mm

15,500km² of marine areas

Communities

Active. Informed. Knowledgeable.

Engaging with volunteers, community, schools, landholders, industries, Aboriginal groups, and local government.

Coastal-savvy green thumbs

Ten workshops were held across Yorke Peninsula from March to June teaching coastal dwellers how to create beautiful gardens that can handle harsh coastal conditions.

Nearly 200 participants flocked to workshops held by landscape officers at Hardwicke Bay, James Well and Rogues Point, Balgowan, Corny Point, Tickera, Port Broughton, Moonta, Kadina, Yorketown and Foul Bay. Participants learnt how to bring different landscape styles to life using native species, plant maintenance tips and the common garden plants that are actually environmental weeds. Everyone received a copy of Coastal Gardens: A Planting Guide, which is also available online.



Healthy coast

Coastal

Coastal gardens

MANY LANDSCAP





Blyth's inspiring streetscape

It's worth stopping at Blyth's Terrace Garden to see what's possible with native plants. Friends of the Terrace have planted 1200 native plants (700 species) along a 250m stretch of South Terrace. We're talking more than 100 volunteer hours, planting, hand watering and weeding!

The idea is to beautify Blyth, educate the public and show how a wide variety of species can be used in gardens to encourage biodiversity.

Friends of the Terrace won a Bite-sized Grant to fund 140 stainless steel, laser-etched native plant signs. So when you spot a plant you love, you'll know its name in case you want one for your garden!

Local experts inspire nature appreciation



You know you're at a Nature Festival event when the presenter has to speak up to be heard over a chorus of frogs! That was the case for Graham Brookman of the Gawler River Riparian Restoration Group, who hosted the first of 4 Nature Festival events in October.

Through the popular Spring Walk and Talk events, the Board brought together passionate nature experts with interested locals.

- Graham and Anne Marie Brookman shared their know-how with a small group in Hillier, many of whom are looking to start their own creek restoration projects.
- In Ardrossan, Adrian Shackley sparked awareness about the town's 6.8ha patch of unique grassland.
- A group of 19 locals, mostly farmers, joined Anne Brown and Bruce Michael on a tour of a healthy native grassland at Barunga Gap.
- Adrian Shackley reappeared at Levi Creek Conservation Park for a show and tell of the revegetation in Frankton.

Many hands make light work controlling cacti

Kudos to the Hundred of Hardy Landcare Group which targeted 4,733 cacti in one long weekend.

The community group joined forces with members of the SA Rogaining Association to control the prickly declared pest plant in the Peterborough area in October 2022. The 20 volunteers contributed 110 hours to the cause and covered 300 hectares impacted by wheel cactus (*Opuntia spp.*) – an invasive weed that damages stock, wildlife and our natural landscapes. Through our Bitesized Grants program, they were able to purchase the chemicals for the weekend's weed control work.



How people power is returning a spectacular raptor to Yorke Peninsula

An endangered bird that once patrolled Yorke Peninsula's coastline is making a comeback thanks to an incredible community-led effort. Only 7 years ago the future looked grim for the fish-eating eastern osprey, with no breeding pairs left on Yorke Peninsula's mainland.

Thanks to the Southern Yorke Peninsula Landcare Group, 7 artificial nest platforms have been installed across Yorke Peninsula, all constructed by volunteers at the Ardrossan Community & Men's Shed. They were ably supported by Friends of Osprey and its coastal raptor expert lan Falkenberg. Students at Yorketown Area School also recently got involved by building 6 nests for platforms around the state.

Two platforms – installed at Port Broughton and Coobowie – were funded by the Board's Djulda-wawa Badja project and in exciting news, just 4 hours after the Coobowie nest was installed, an osprey pair flew in and have been spotted there every day since.











1,207 volunteers generously provided 58,875 volunteer hours in our region

24 community groups received free insurance through the Board

6 schools received support via our grant funding

11 schools involved in cultural education sessions through our Nature Education program.

\$8,343 funded by the Board for these sessions.



Funded 22 Grassroots Grants, totalling \$192,467 and \$225,822 in-kind value

18 Bite-sized Grants funded, totalling \$20,080 with \$115,588 in-kind value



On Facebook, we reached 103,697 people added 454 new followers and had 11,490 Facebook page visits



\$166,908 spent on Aboriginal employment, services or products

7 First Nations projects funded by Grassroots or **Bite-sized grants**



4 Aboriginal Engagement Committee meetings held on Country



Biodiversity

Protected. Improved. Restored.

Protecting ecosystems, native vegetation, threatened and listed species, Aboriginal significant sites, rivers and creeks, coasts and marine areas

Bettongs on board

Seven commercial flights landed in Adelaide in June 2023 with some unusual passengers - a group of tiny, critically endangered marsupials.

Seventy-three brush-tailed bettongs were flown more than 2,000 kilometres from WA to a new home in Dhilba Guuranda-Innes National Park as part of Marna Banggara, an ambitious project to restore locally extinct species to Yorke Peninsula.

The 49 male and 24 female bettongs, known as 'yalgi' to Narungga people, were collected from a healthy wild population in Dryandra National Park and from within the fenced Dryandra Woylie Numbat Sanctuary, 180 km south-east of Perth.

This is the fourth and largest group of bettongs to be released into the park over the past 3 years as part of Marna Banggara.

Previous releases have included two cohorts of animals from Wedge Island in SA, and one group from the Upper Warren region of WA. Monitoring in early 2023 showed that the yalgi population continues to grow.

- Almost half of the 85 yalgi caught were born on Yorke Peninsula
- Nearly every female was carrying pouch young

Marna Banggara is jointly funded through the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, the South Australian Department for Environment and Water, WWF-Australia, and Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, in partnership with the Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation and with the support of Traditional Custodians, the Narungga people.

Read more about Marna Banggara: https://marnabanggara.com.au/



Djulda-wawa Badja project to build coastal resilience

The 2-year Djulda-wawa Badja project kicked off in September 2022 with 46 hectares of revegetation. Our partner Greening Australia coordinated weeding, seeding and planting at Port Victoria and Point Pearce, creating corridors between the beach and farmland that will prevent erosion and increase biodiversity over time. The 2023 direct seeding program began in June with Trees for Life completing a further 29 hectares.

Narungga and Ngadjuri man Farrin Miller joined the Board's staff in February as the Djulda-wawa Badja Ranger and hit the ground running, developing fencing and weed control projects. He aims to have a positive influence on First Nations youth by engaging them in tree planting and other coastal work.

Birdos rejoice with rare find in Hallelujah Hills near Burra

A bird banding project in the Hallelujah Hills near Burra found 20 different bird species, including a rare diamond firetail.

Thanks to Grassroots Grants funding, Worlds End Conservation (WEC) has monitored bird species over the October long weekend for the past 3 years. In 2022, out of the 88 birds caught, 71 were new and 17 had bands. It's the most species caught in the past 3 years, with the added bonus of finding a diamond firetail, a striking finch that is vulnerable in South Australia.







Survey to monitor river red gums on Nukunu Country

Checking on the health of river red gums along the Baroota and Telowie Creeks in the southern Flinders Ranges was part of a monitoring exercise in late 2022.

With Baroota Creek on Nukunu Country, the Board worked with Nukunu people to record tree size, canopy health and the presence of any seedlings. Unfortunately, many trees showed signs of significant stress, particularly the larger, older trees. Repeat surveys are planned for autumn each year to help us understand how they're faring, what can be done to support their health and the impacts of water management, like environmental water releases.

This project is jointly funded through the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and the Australian Government's National Landcare program.

Improving habitat for pygmy bluetongue lizards

The endangered pygmy bluetongue lizard (*Tiliqua adelaidensis*), which actually has a pink tongue, is now only found in the Northern and Yorke region.

The problem for these lizards, which live in holes abandoned by trapdoor spiders, is that their native grassland habitat is declining. They need healthy grasses that shelter and protect them and clear spaces between tussocks to hunt for insects.

With funding from the Australian Government, through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, the Board worked with 5 private landholders to improve patches of native grassland through rotational grazing, a farming method that helps to maintain healthy grasses and inter-tussock spaces.





Marna Banggara:

73 brush-tailed bettongs (yalgiri) released on Yorke Peninsula



19,911 feral cat

the project area

and fox baits laid in

Djulda-wawa Badja project:

130 hectares of boxthorn and wild artichoke coastal weed control

13,000 extra seedlings planted across 70 coastal locations

130 hectares **direct seeded** with coastal species

24 partnership groups involved in Djulda-wawa Badja, working together to protect the coast

Pygmy bluetongue project:

295 pygmy bluetongue **lizards** found during surveys



1428 hectares of pygmy bluetongue habitat undergoing restoration through grants

87 people attended grazing and grassland workshops







in yalgi release



19 First Nations people engaged

in the project

361km of Yorke Peninsula habitat surveyed during 2022 hooded plover biennial count

310 hooded plovers recorded **34** breeding pairs

monitored

24 fledglings took flight

12 cameras installed for nest monitoring



Water management

Efficient. Sustainable. Monitored.

Protecting watercourses, permanent pools, water use, groundwater, cultural water, environmental flows, water-dependent ecosystems, river red gums, and saline wetlands and lakes

Nukunu welcome Baroota water release for gum tree health

Nukunu people expressed relief as the water release valves on the Baroota Reservoir in the southern Flinders Ranges opened to revitalise the health of local river red gum trees at the start of spring. It was the first environmental and cultural water release from SA Water's Baroota Reservoir, which aims to improve gum tree resilience, recharge groundwater reserves and help Nukunu people meet their cultural obligations of caring for Country. Nukunu Elder Lindsay Thomas, who observed the start of the trial release in early September with another 15 Nukunu people, said he felt relieved and energised by the water flowing along Baroota Creek. "We've been fighting for so long to get that water to run through there to heal our red gums in the creek, which are starting to wither," said Mr Thomas. "With this release, we're hoping to revitalise the whole area and hopefully put water back into our aquifers."







Rain allows second water release into Crystal Brook Creek

Community members concerned about the health of river red gums along Crystal Brook Creek welcomed a follow-up environmental water release from Beetaloo Reservoir in November. Higher than average winter and spring rainfall replenished water levels in the reservoir, providing the unexpected opportunity for a second environmental flow (e-flow).

"Being able to piggyback on the natural flows that we've seen this season was an opportunity too good to miss," said Northern and Yorke Landscape Board Planning Officer Jennifer Munro. "The water-dependent ecosystems stand to benefit and we hope that the recharge of the groundwater systems will support the health and condition of the river red gums."

The first release in 2021 involved a flow of more than 700 megalitres. The e-flows were a collaborative project between Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, SA Water, the Department for Environment and Water and the local community.

Environmental and Cultural Flows

A project that builds on the Beetaloo and Baroota water releases received Landscape Priorities Funding in April. The Environmental and Cultural Flows project aims to restore flows in Baroota, Beetaloo and Barossa to bring back ecosystem health in collaboration with First Nations, universities, landholders and the community.

The project seeks to monitor the health of ecosystems that are reliant on water, including monitoring fish, frogs and insects within the rivers and creeks. The community is encouraged to get involved through the Bioblitz monitoring program.



Capturing community's views about the Barossa WAP

A forum to discuss the future management of water in the Barossa was held in November, as part of the consultation process around amending the Barossa Water Allocation Plan, a legal document that sets the rules for managing native water.

Attendees heard from Ngadjuri First Nation member Carlo Sansbury about the Aboriginal water perspective, together with scientists and planning experts from the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Green Adelaide and the Department for Environment and Water.

A draft amended Plan has been completed and formal consultation is planned in 2024.

Regenerating catchments across the Mid North Farmscape

A 3-year project to improve the farming landscape's condition and increase vegetation connectivity in the local river system began in 2022. While planning for significant revegetation and fencing activities was the focus, the project has already achieved:

- Fencing of 3 gullies on a North Para property
- Work plans for 10 properties
- · Species lists for revegetation sites

Funded by the Landscape Priority Fund, the Regenerating Catchments project aims to restore 16ha of river corridor, improve water quality through stock exclusion and share knowledge with riparian landholders.











41 Water Affecting Activities enquiries, with **21 permits issued** and 9 development approvals reviewed





About **600 megalitres** of of environmental flows released into Baroota and Crystal Brook Creeks

20 groundwater salinity samples collected and tested

2 Water Allocation Plans (WAPs) for Barossa and Baroota under review, with 19 Aboriginal people engaged in the process





7 surface water, **19** ground water, 8 tree condition index, and **18** fish survey monitoring sites.



Sustainable agriculture

Adaptive. Resilient. Healthy.

Enhancing soil, water and biodiversity value to build resilience in agricultural systems.

Cricket balls prepare paddocks for natural grazing

The cricket ball or beer can method of grazing management was one of the take-home messages from Dick Richardson's Grazing Naturally workshops held in Gumbowie, Burra and Hummocks in February and March.

Thirty-five attendees at the 3 workshops learnt the basic principles of Grazing Naturally, a land management system that improves soil health, stocking rates and profitability.

An internationally-recognised natural grazing expert, Dick explained the use of priority and sabbath paddocks in a grazing rotation. In the priority paddock, when the pasture is high enough to cover a cricket ball or beer can, it's time to move the stock back in to remove dead matter, keep the grass fresh, sweet and green and prevent it from going to seed. It becomes the sabbath paddock the following season, which renews the seed bank, provides habitat for grassland birds, and increases the ecological and nutritional diversity of the herbaceous plants.

Digging deep to learn about soil

Year 12 agriculture students at Clare High School studied what's beneath their feet and got their hands dirty in April with help from the Board's Soil Extension Officer Geoff Kew. The students took soil samples near the school's vineyards and examined soil profiles.

In 2 soil pits, they used picks to expose the soil structure, identify the different horizons and observe the roots. They also practised hand texturing to assess a soil sample's textural characteristics.

Geoff Kew's role is part of a state-wide network of soil extension officers designed to help land managers optimise soil health.

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Tune into Drought Resilience Podcast

Two bonus episodes of The Drought Resilience Podcast are now available, featuring sheep farming families from Hawker and Cradock.

Thanks to Deb Scammell from Talking Livestock and podcast host Annabelle Homer from Voice it, farmers share how they navigated their businesses and families through the hardships of drought.

- Brother and sister team Amey and Reuben Solly from Yednalue Station near Cradock share how their transport business and kindness from other farming families got them through one of the toughest periods of their lives.
- On Holowiliena Station near Hawker, Luke and Frances Frahn turned to tourism when drought led to no sheep on their property for the first time since the 1850s.

These podcasts are supported by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board as part of the Living Flinders initiative, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Native seeds to sprout on grazing country across Rangelands

More than 100 kilograms of native seed was planted across 120 hectares on private properties in the Orroroo area in June.

It's part of the Arid Seeding project, delivered by our partner Greening Australia and jointly funded by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. Greening Australia worked with Nukunu people over 6 months to collect 108kg of seed from 25 native species, which was planted with a direct seeder specially engineered for the job.

It will provide farmers in marginal grazing country with native perennial plants to improve their drought resilience and production and it's provided First Nations people with the opportunity to build capacity around native seed collection.



7 weather stations maintained in Burra, Burra Mokota, Burra Sod Hut, Virginia, Mt Pleasant, Point Pass and Neales Flat

3 Grassroots Grants-funded agricultural projects



12 workshops and field days

2 episodes for The Drought Resilience Podcast

106 kilograms of native seed collected by Nukunu and 160 hectares direct seeded to restore degraded land **30 farmers** with increased knowledge on **best practice grazing** management



4,733 wheel cacti (Optuntia spp.) injected across pastoral

grazing properties



Pest plants and animals

Targeted. Coordinated. Collaborative.

Reducing economic and environmental impacts of pests

Stopping silverleaf nightshade

Land managers were urged to catch new outbreaks of silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) in early summer to prevent a costly eradication and crop yield problem.

The season's high rainfall was conducive to the weed arriving on agricultural properties previously considered clean of the deep-rooted pest plant. Lochiel farmer Mitchell Nicholls shared his family's bitter experience with the weed and warned other farmers to take early action. "Silverleaf nightshade is out of control on our farm despite our best efforts. It's worth getting onto early, before it becomes a problem," he said.

Drones target noogoora burr

Drone technology tackled a plague infestation of the pest plant noogoora burr that has travelled 19km along Amyton Creek near Willowie.

The declared weed, which was identified as an increasing issue in the area 3 years ago, poses a serious threat to local farming operations and the survival of native vegetation.

The process involved a drone contractor mapping a 100 metre-wide stretch of the 19km terrain with a specialised mapping drone that takes high resolution video and distinguishes the noogoora burr from native vegetation based on colour identification. Due to some dense infestations, manually marking waypoints was also required. With the data processed, a spray drone carrying a mix of water and spray material was then used to treat the noogoora burr plants.





Volunteers join cactus cull campaign

They came, they saw, they conquered a cactus! Ten volunteers, together with Port Pirie Regional Council staff and Landscape Officers pitched in at our cactus working bee in April. The prickly opuntia cactus is an invasive declared weed that's creeping into Nelshaby Reserve. The cactus crew injected about 150 cactus plants across 10 registered properties and along roadsides.

Cochineal nursery in Orroroo

We have some proud, adoptive parents in our Orroroo office. Our landscape officers unveiled a new glasshouse nursery where they're raising a tribe of tiny, scale insects. Known as cochineal, these sap-sucking biocontrol agents are a great option for reducing the spread of Opuntia and Cylindropuntia cacti. Spiny declared pest plants, these cactus species can quickly cover your property, outcompeting native vegetation and ruining paddocks if not controlled. Cochineal works best on dense stands of cacti and love warm, dry weather, but once established they can work wonders on an infestation.

Region-wide fox control campaign

Landholders across the region banded together in spring and autumn to target foxes through the Board's coordinated baiting program. More than 27,000 baits, subsidised by the Board, were sold to landholders across the region. Foxes are a significant pest that have a large impact on agriculture and the environment through predation and the spread of weeds and diseases.





304 landholders involved in fox bait distribution in spring and autumn

Landholders supplied with **27,346 fox baits.**



1319 enquiries including **pest plant and animal** control advice

Biological weed control: **5** boxthorn rust nursery sites

42 sites supplied with plume moth for horehound control

24 landholders received cochineal to control opuntia cacti, plus **3 cochineal nurseries** were established across the region

Achievement snapshot

The Northern and Yorke region has nine dedicated Board members at its helm, including a Chair. The Board works alongside the community, Traditional Owners, councils and other stakeholders to sustainably manage landscapes and maximise the ecological, environmental, economic and social benefits for the region. To get to know our Board members, go to our website.

Here is a snapshot of the key projects and activities delivered in 2022-2023:

Communities	\$2.17 m
Support for Cultural Burning and development of Healthy Country Plans	\checkmark
Nature Education Program	\checkmark
Aboriginal Engagement Committee	\checkmark
Sponsorship for educational events throughout the region	\checkmark
Grassroots and Bite-sized grant programs	\checkmark
Communication and Engagement program	\checkmark
Insurance support for community land management groups	\checkmark
Biodiversity	\$1.88 m
Marna Banggara project	\checkmark
Djulda-wawa Badja project	\checkmark
Regenerating Catchments in the Mid North Farmscape	\checkmark
Delivery of actions outlined in the Regional Alliance Climate Sector Agreement	\checkmark
Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard project	\checkmark
Water Management	\$1.15 m
Barossa Water Allocation Plan and Baroota Water Allocation Planning	\checkmark
Environmental flows from Baroota and Beetaloo	\checkmark
Promotion of environmental and cultural flows in water management planning	\checkmark
Sustainable Agriculture	\$1.40 m
Partnership with Ag-Ex to provide a Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator	\checkmark
Weather Station and Soil Moisture sensors	\checkmark
Goyders Line and Living Flinders Projects	\checkmark
Soil Extension Officer	\checkmark
Pest Plant and Animal Control	\$2.25m
Fox and rabbit bait sales and distribution	\checkmark
Release biological controls for pest weeds	\checkmark
Rail and road corridor weed management plans	\checkmark
Weed control workshops and advice	\checkmark

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Keep in touch

Here are some of the ways you can keep up-to-date with the latest news from the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board:

landscape.sa.gov.au/ny



- NYLandscapeSA
- Yakka News landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/subscribe
 - youtube.com (Northern and Yorke Landscape Board)

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