A resilient region where land, biodiversity water, coasts and communities thrive

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA NORTHERN AND YORKE

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board Meeting - Minutes

Meeting 49			
Date:	Wednesday, 24th of June 2026		
Start time:	10:02am	**Finish time:**	3.37pm
Location:	Lutheran Church Clare, 5 Sabine Street		
Present:			
Board members:	Geoff White (Chair), Peter Angus, Sue Scarman, Nicki Robins [teams], Erika Lawley		
Staff:	Tony Fox (*General Manager*), Rebecca Howard *(Manager, Business and Planning)*, Libby Duncan (*Projects Planning and Reporting Manager),* Paul O'Leary (*Lanscape Operations and Compliance Manager),* Danielle Bone (*Business and Finance Services Coordinator),* Kate Pearce (Rangelands, Team Leader) and Phoebe Helbig (*Executive Assistant/Officer; minute taker*),		
Guests:	Ange Ruddenklau (PIRSA), Anita Thomas (The Nature Conservancy; teams)		
Apologies	Holly Cowan, Leo Redden		

Item	**1 Meeting Standing Items**
1.1	**Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and apologies** The Chair opened the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board (NYLB) meeting at 10.02am, welcoming members and NYLB staff. Chair acknowledged the traditional owners of the land and noted apologies from H Cowan and L Redden.
1.2	**Additional agenda items** Refer to item 7.1
1.3	**Conflict of interest disclosures** No new disclosures
1.4	**Acceptance of minutes from the previous meeting** The minutes from meeting 48 held on *20 May 2026* were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. S Scarman / N Robins : ***CARRIED / AIF***
1.5	**Action Register** The Action Register was reviewed and updated.
2 Deputations and Presentations	
2.1	Ange Ruddenklau provided an **update** on behalf of the **Department of Primary Industries, South Australia**. Key points of the update included: • **Avian Influenza (Bird Flu):** Cases have been detected in Western Australia; however, there are currently no confirmed cases in South Australia. Biosecurity teams are preparing in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), which is leading the national response. South Australian surveillance efforts are being managed by PIRSA and SA Health. A whole-of-government approach is being undertaken to strengthen preparedness, including funding for equipment to support rapid on-ground response. Agencies are actively prepared to undertake response exercises if required. • **Locust Activity:** Locust movements and populations are changing daily, with a record-breaking start to the season reported across the Eastern Mallee, Northern Pastoral region, Eyre Peninsula, and Upper Mid North. Monitoring and workshops are scheduled to support data collection and coordination of any response. Landholders are encouraged to undertake control measures while locusts remain in early development stages and are responsible for managing outbreaks on their properties. A working group will convene shortly to address ongoing management..

	• **Recreational Fishing Compliance:** Upgrades to fish measuring signage have been completed statewide to support compliance and improve public awareness of size limits. • **Industrial Hemp Trials:** Funding has been allocated to expand and strengthen trials into industrial hemp, supporting research and development in this sector • Adelaide hosting **National Algal Bloom Research Centre**, leading work and scientific research. • **SARDI Pest Facts:** The SARDI "Pest Facts" online resource continues to provide up-to-date information on current pest activity, including practical guidance on identification, monitoring, and control methods. • **AgTown Recognition:** Five Northern and Yorke region towns have been selected as finalists from a statewide pool of ten. • **Grain Production Outlook:** Grain production is forecast to exceed last year's harvest, reflecting a strong start to the season. Current projections indicate yields are on track to reach the 10-year average. • **Mesonet Weather Station Network:** Management of the regional weather station network remains unclear. PIRSA has established a working group and is providing funding for Hydro-Consulting to deliver expert advice and guidance to support the group. Work is ongoing to progress models, including long-term ownership and management arrangements.
10.26am – P Angus joined the meeting.	
2.2	Anita Thomas from The Nature Conservancy joined the meeting via teams to present to the board on **Rebuilding SA's lost Shellfish Reefs**. Key points from the presentation included: • **Shellfish Reef Restoration**: Approximately 62 hectares of shellfish reefs have been established to date, with ambitions to expand restoration efforts through to 2030. The reefs are designed to provide structurally complex habitats that support diverse marine life, recognising oysters as a critical "ecosystem engineer." • **Ecological Benefits:** Restoration addresses the decline in natural hard substrate required for oyster settlement, which has been lost due to degradation. Rebuilt reefs function as both oyster nurseries and habitat for broader marine species, contributing to ecological resilience and recovery. Oysters also play an important role in improving water quality through filtration, helping to reduce algal concentrations. • **Project Scope and Site Selection:** A priority area includes a 50 km stretch between Ardrossan and Stansbury (approx. 45,000 hectares), with further refinement underway to identify suitable sites. Current focus areas include Black Point and Sheoak Flat. Site selection is being guided by environmental suitability and informed by consultation with local experts and scientists, with a preference for locations that avoid interference with existing structured habitats. • **Environmental Observations:** Despite recent algal bloom impacts on marine ecosystems, oyster spawning and recruitment are continuing. While fish abundance has reduced and canopy cover has been impacted in some areas, early signs of recovery are evident, including regrowth of marine vegetation and ongoing survival of oyster populations (e.g. Glenelg). • **Project Timeline and Next Steps:** A proposed timeline of new works in our region extends through to January 2029. Site identification is expected to be refined by August, with stakeholder consultation and permitting processes ongoing. Construction of new reef structures is targeted to commence in November next year. • **Partnerships and Engagement:** The project includes Narungga Nation collaboration, with potential opportunities for involvement in monitoring, community engagement, and capacity building. Broader discussions are also underway regarding engagement with industry partners. **Action**: P Helbig to attain presentation from Anita to share with members.
2.3	**Business Plan Workshop**

	An overview of the Business Plan was provided, including its legislative requirements and structure. The plan's framework focuses on long-term strategic objectives (20 years), priorities and focus areas (5 years), and annual plans outlining specific programs and projects. The structure of the plan was presented, including breakdowns across programs, projects, and corporate costs, alongside a summary of income sources and funding allocations. Key strategic objectives and associated programs were outlined and discussed, including: • Climate-ready communities • Caring for nature • Thriving native species and habitats • Healthy water and coasts • Resilient and sustainable agriculture • Managed pest plants and animals (noted discussion to refine wording of this objective). Visual summaries of investment across these objectives were presented, highlighting funding contributions from both levy revenue and external sources. The organisation's current financial position was reviewed. Discussions included the re-profiling of funds, with the option to recommit external funding as carry-over into the next financial year where required.
2.4	**20-year Aspirational Plan Workshop** The purpose and value of the plan were discussed. While not a required document, it is intended as a long-term, aspirational guide for the region rather than a binding plan. It should represent the broader region and reflect stakeholder input as originally workshopped, not just the Board. Feedback highlighted that the current language and vision are too complex, with a need to simplify wording and improve accessibility. Strong support was expressed for retaining a long-term vision, but with clearer, outcome-focused statements. It was agreed the plan should avoid detailed targets and statistics and instead provide clear context about its role. **Action**: Retain the plan, but rename, reframe its purpose, simplify the vision, improve language, remove targets, and identify key partners in building the plan.
2.5	Kate Pearce joined the meeting to provide an Rangeland District Update. An overview of the region and the rangelands team was provided, including key programs and projects aligned with Landscape Board priorities • Pest Animal and Plants – Activities include 1080 wild dog injection days and fox bait distribution programs. Fox baiting efforts have declined over the past five years. Priority pest plants and emerging pest plant threats across the rangelands were identified and discussed, along with the application of biocontrol methods. • Biodiversity – Projects are largely delivery-focused, with initiatives such as Frankenpitter and Stronger Country supporting landholders and landscape outcomes, alongside SA Arid Lands (SAAL) programs. • Community – Support continues through community grants, drought-related steering groups (in the absence of a drought hub), education days, and workshops, particularly focused on sustainable agriculture. • Water – Water management activities were outlined, including water releases at Beetaloo and Baroota, with Jennifer Munro leading this work
	Meeting broke for lunch at 12:45pm ????
6 In Camera Session	
6.1	At 1.14pm the meeting was moved to '*In*-Camera' due to the information the disclosure (J) of which: *(i) would divulge information provided on a confidential basis by or to a Minister of the Crown, or another public authority or official;* *(ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest; (Ref: Section 23 (5) LSA Act.)* G White / S Scarman: ***CARRIED***

	It was noted staff: Rebecca Howard, Tony Fox, Paul O'Leary, Libby Duncan, Phoebe Helbig and Kate Pearce remained in the room. **Motion** • *At 1.30pm the meeting moved out of 'In-Camera and back to the main meeting where members of the public may be present* G White / S Scarman: ***CARRIED***
3 Items for Decision and Discussion	
3.2	**Annual Budget 2026-27** Funding allocations across levy income and external sources were reviewed, including associated risks and issues within the annual budget. Key pressures identified include rising interest rates and ongoing inflation. The current budget incorporates inflation-adjusted estimates, with contingencies included to account for further cost increases. A potential risk was identified regarding future reliance on external funding, noting that current overspends may not be sustainable if such funding is reduced or unavailable. There is an intention to progressively reduce carry-over funding and improve long-term financial sustainability. A shift in approach is proposed to discourage the practice of deferring funds ("carrying forward") to avoid issues arising in the future. **Recommendation** ***The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board:*** • ***Approve the 2026-2027 budget as outlined in this paper.*** E Lawley / S Scarman: ***CARRIED / AIF***
3.3	**Financial Analysis** D Bone presented the Financial Analysis Year to Date for May 2026. The Board is forecasting a year-end operating deficit of $619,000, largely driven by 2024–25 project carryovers and timing of project expenditure. Despite the forecast deficit, the Board maintains a strong financial position, with forecast cash reserves of approximately $4.9 million and forecast equity of $4.7 million at 30 June 2026. Employee costs are increasing, driven by wage rises and the implementation of a 3.75% salary increase, although vacancies earlier in the year have partially offset this impact. Rising operational costs, including wages and vehicle expenses, continue to place pressure on budgets and reflect broader inflationary impacts. These financial pressures are being partly offset by underspends in levy-funded projects, currently estimated at approximately $311,000. Several major projects have been reprofiled or carried forward into 2026–27, providing flexibility in funding delivery and expenditure timelines. The Board remains focused on delivering Landscape Plan objectives while carefully managing financial risks associated with inflation, wage growth and project delivery. **Recommendation** ***The Northern & Yorke Landscape Board:*** • ***Receive and endorse the YTD May 2026 Financial Analysis*** E Lawley / S Scarman: ***CARRIED / AIF***
3.4	**5 year financial forecast** The five-year forecast presented by R Howard highlights increasing financial pressure, with most costs either mandated or difficult to reduce. Salary and wage costs, together with other fixed expenses, are limiting flexibility in program and project delivery. External funding is critical to maintaining current service levels and meeting ongoing obligations. Early planning is required for 2028–29, particularly given risks associated with future NHT funding arrangements. Opportunities to improve sustainability include vacancy management, reducing fixed costs where possible, and ongoing workforce reviews. Similar challenges are being experienced across all Landscape Boards, creating opportunities for coordinated funding advocacy.

4 For Noting and carried as one motion	
4.1	**Work, healthy safety and wellbeing committee** Draft minutes of 3 June 2026
4.2	**Financial delegation review** The board noted the financial delegation review.
4.3	**Marna Banggara Executive Steering Committee** The board noted the selection of Leo Redden to represent the board on the committee with E Lawley and P Angus being proxies. Items 4.1 to 4.3 G White / E Lawley: ***CARRIED / AIF***
4.4	**Presiding Member** No report was provided at the meeting, G White to provide a report post meeting (**Action**)
4.5	**Board Members:** No report for board members was noted, P Angus will provide an update from the Primary Industries and Regions Forum held in May (**Action**).
4.6	**Communications and Engagement** A communication report was reviewed and noted by the board
4.7	**Correspondence** Tabled
4.8	**Board Forward Planner** Reviewed
4.9	**Board Calendar of Events** Reviewed and updated
7 Other Items	
7.1	Barossa Water Allocation Plan (WAP) - Discussions with the Minister identified a timing issue relating to the approval process. The proposed WAP requires consideration by Cabinet, supported by advice from DEW, and there was insufficient time to complete the necessary approvals for implementation by 1 July 2026. The earliest opportunity for Cabinet approval is now expected in August 2026. As a result, the WAP will not take effect until 1 July 2027. While the delay postpones the implementation of allocation reductions, it provides water users with additional time to prepare for any future changes. Correspondence will be issued to stakeholders and licence holders outlining the delay. A broad media campaign is not planned at this stage, with communications to be coordinated following Cabinet consideration in August. Minister site visit to region - Minister Bourke visit has been scheduled for November 2026, itinerary to be planned. Board tenure - The terms of all Board members, with the exception of H. Cowan, conclude at the end of January 2027. A nomination and appointment process will commence in the near future. Arrangements for continuing members will be determined through a separate process.
8 Meeting Closure	
8.1	Next meeting: *19 August 2026, Gawler* Invitations for next meeting were discussed.
8.2	Meeting closed at 3.37pm

Confirmed on *19 August 2026*, as a true and correct record

Geoffrey White
Geoffrey White (Aug 25, 2026 11:15:11 GMT+9.5)

Geoffrey White
Presiding Member