

South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board

Regional Landscape Plan 2026 – 2031

DRAFT

Acknowledgment of Country

The SA Arid Lands Landscape Board acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters of our region. We pay our respects to the 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, and commit to working together to look after our landscapes.

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Lake Everard Landscape, Country of the Gawler Ranges People.
Cover: A Hill sunray (*Anemocarpa saxatilis*) grows in the landscape of the Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park. Antakirinja Matu-Yankunyjtatjara Country. Photo by Tori Love.

Foreword

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South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Region



Stats and facts

Population: ~25,000¹

(Port Augusta 14,453; Roxby Downs 4,089; Coober Pedy 1,526; Flinders Ranges 1,671; Outback 3,010)¹

Area: ~525,000 km²

First Nations: Adnyamathanha, Antakirinja Matu – Yankunytjatjara, Arabana, Barngarla, Dieri, Eringa, Gawler Ranges, Irrwanyere, Kokatha, Kuyani, Malyankapa, Ngadjuri, Nukunu, Tjaiyiwara Unmurru, Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi, Walka Wani, Wilyakali, Yandruwandha/Yawarrawarrka²

Main land uses: Livestock grazing (cattle and sheep), conservation (public and private reserves), mining (minerals, petroleum and gas), defence, First Nations managed land³.

Regional industries: Pastoralism, mining, gas and petroleum, renewable energy and tourism³.

Our vision

Leading the way to biodiverse and productive landscapes in a changing climate

Regional priorities

Our focus areas



CLIMATE RESILIENT REGION

Resilient landscapes, communities, and enterprises are mitigating and adapting to climate change

- Ensure climate risk is embedded in all board business
- Provide land managers and community with the knowledge and skills they need to prepare, mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Explore adaptation pathways to ensure landscapes and communities are climate resilient



PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

People and community are central to looking after our landscapes

- Support First Nations partnerships for cross-cultural knowledge sharing and fostering Healthy Country outcomes
- Foster a shared responsibility for landscape stewardship
- Raise awareness of the region's natural, heritage, and cultural values
- Support community action to achieve land, water and coastal management outcomes
- Foster, build and maintain strategic partnerships and investment to manage the regions natural resources



WATER MANAGEMENT

The region's water resources are managed judiciously

- Plan, research & leverage infrastructure investment to support the judicious use of groundwater
- Support the hydrogeological monitoring of Great Artesian Basin springs and other groundwater resources
- Understand and manage surface water systems including the Lake Eyre Basin



ADAPTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT

Land management practices protect soil, vegetation and biodiversity

- Reduce the impacts of pest plants and animals on production systems
- Reduce excessive grazing pressure across all land uses
- Build land managers' capacity in adaptive climate smart agriculture, best practice land management and rehabilitation
- Build knowledge of practices that protect soil health and function



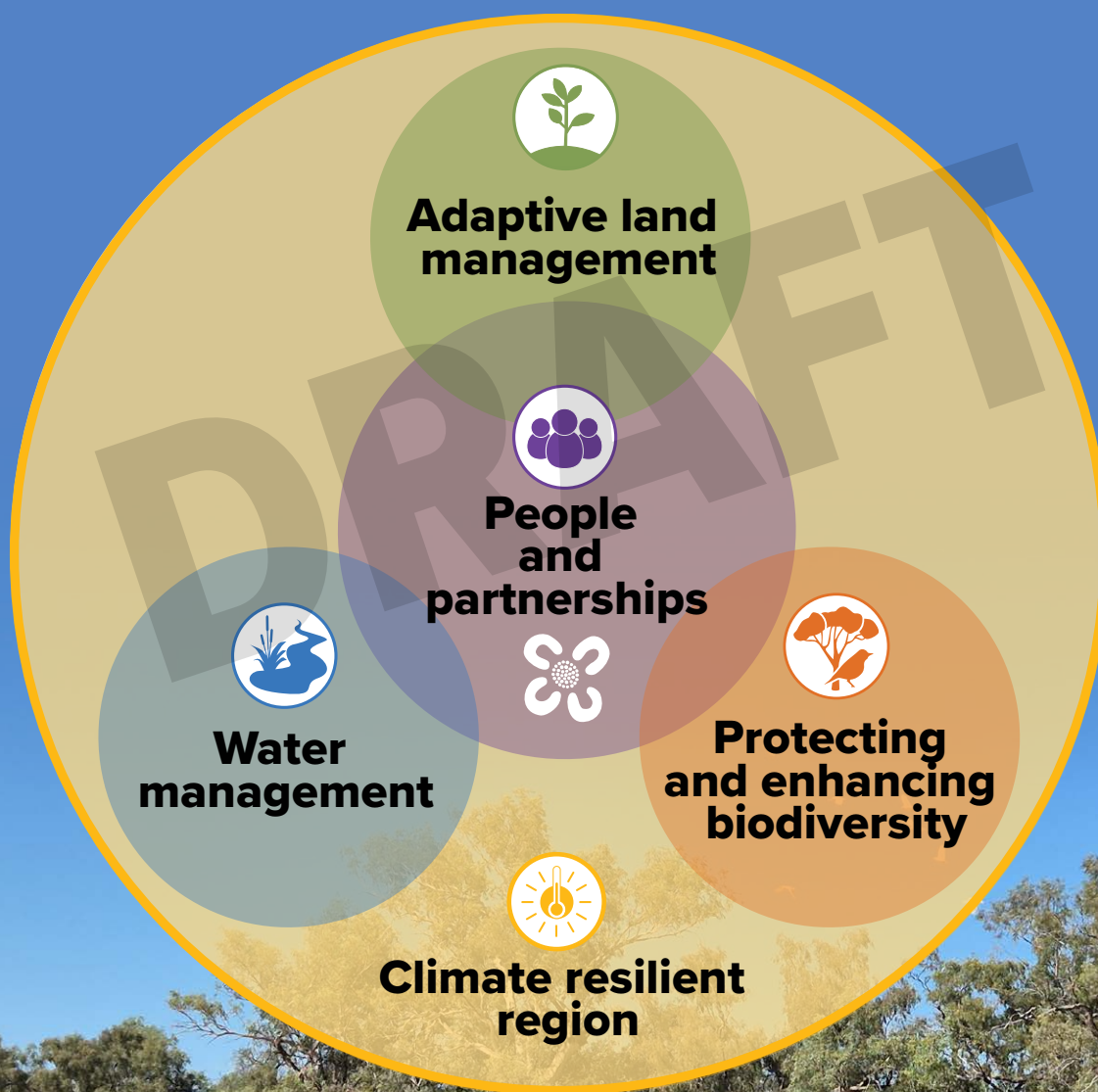
PROTECTING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Intrinsic biodiversity values are protected and enhanced

- Manage and monitor key threats to identified priority natural and Cultural species and places
- Support threatened species and ecosystem recovery
- Partner to maintain and improve the condition of the Great Artesian Basin and water-dependent ecosystems

Winninowie Conservation Park looking out to Yatala Harbour Upper Spencer Gulf Aquatic Reserve, Nukunu Country. Photo by Alice Allington

The South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board's five priorities are all connected. By working with community and stakeholders, it can only achieve a climate resilient region by managing water resources judiciously, supporting adaptive land management practices and by protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Central to the board's work, are both the 'people' and the 'partnerships' that are critical to looking after our natural resources in the South Australian Arid Lands, which includes First Nations interests which are integral to addressing all five priorities. The cross-cutting nature of our priorities are represented below.



A squadron of Australian Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) at Cutrabelbo Waterhole, Yandruwandha/Yawarrawarrka Country. Photo by Kate Cornelsen

Why our landscapes matter

The arid lands region is vast and is home to some of Australia's iconic outback landscapes, from the sandy deserts, gibber plains, breakaways and channel country of the north, to the rounded granite outcrops of the Gawler Ranges, the rugged mountains of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges and Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges in the east and the top of the Spencer Gulf in the south^{3, 4}.

The region intersects two major inland water systems – the Great Artesian Basin – supplying ancient groundwater on which the region's industries depend³, and the Lake Eyre Basin, one of the world's last wild, unregulated river systems⁵.

The region covers more than half of South Australia, yet with only 1.3% of the state's population¹ it contributes significantly to the State's resources for domestic use and the export market.

The landscapes are biodiverse and culturally rich. They contain a diversity of natural ecosystems, supporting native plants and animals, First Nations and other cultural values, ecosystem services and established industries that underpin the regional economy.

These include pastoralism (sheep and cattle production on native pastures, covering 77%⁶ of the region), mining and energy production (minerals, gas, petroleum and renewables), conservation (public and private) and nature-based tourism. In turn, these industries support the remote townships and communities of the region.

Healthy landscapes underpin the region's prosperity and wellbeing and everyone has a role to play in landscape management.



Kowari (*Dasyuroides byrnei*), Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi and Yandruwandha/Yawarrawarrka Country. Photo by Kristian Bell

Challenges and enablers for landscape management

The SA Arid Lands region has a long and successful history of community participation in invigorated landscape management. While much has been achieved, threats to landscape condition remain.

The region will need to continue to prepare, respond and adapt to change.

Climate change, the emergence of new markets, growth in tourism, advances in technology and improved network access in the outback will create new enablers for change alongside challenges for landscape management.

Enablers include:

- Trialling new technologies, nature-based solutions, and innovative climate-smart practices to increase profits and sustainability of systems, while maintaining and monitoring the condition of natural capital in a changing climate;
- Better forecasting, planning, and preparedness for climate impacts
- Diversification of land use into emerging markets, including emission reduction incentives, and recognition of natural capital in environmental and economic management;
- Increased investment in nature repair to offset or inset environmental impacts and achieve carbon neutrality, environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals, and nature positive outcomes;
- Engaging with community and regional visitors to improve peoples' appreciation of, and advocacy for and preservation of the natural environment, heritage, and culture;
- Investigating circular economies in the management

of total grazing pressure, including utilisation of unmarketable pest animals and over-abundant kangaroos as a valuable resource for sustainable use;

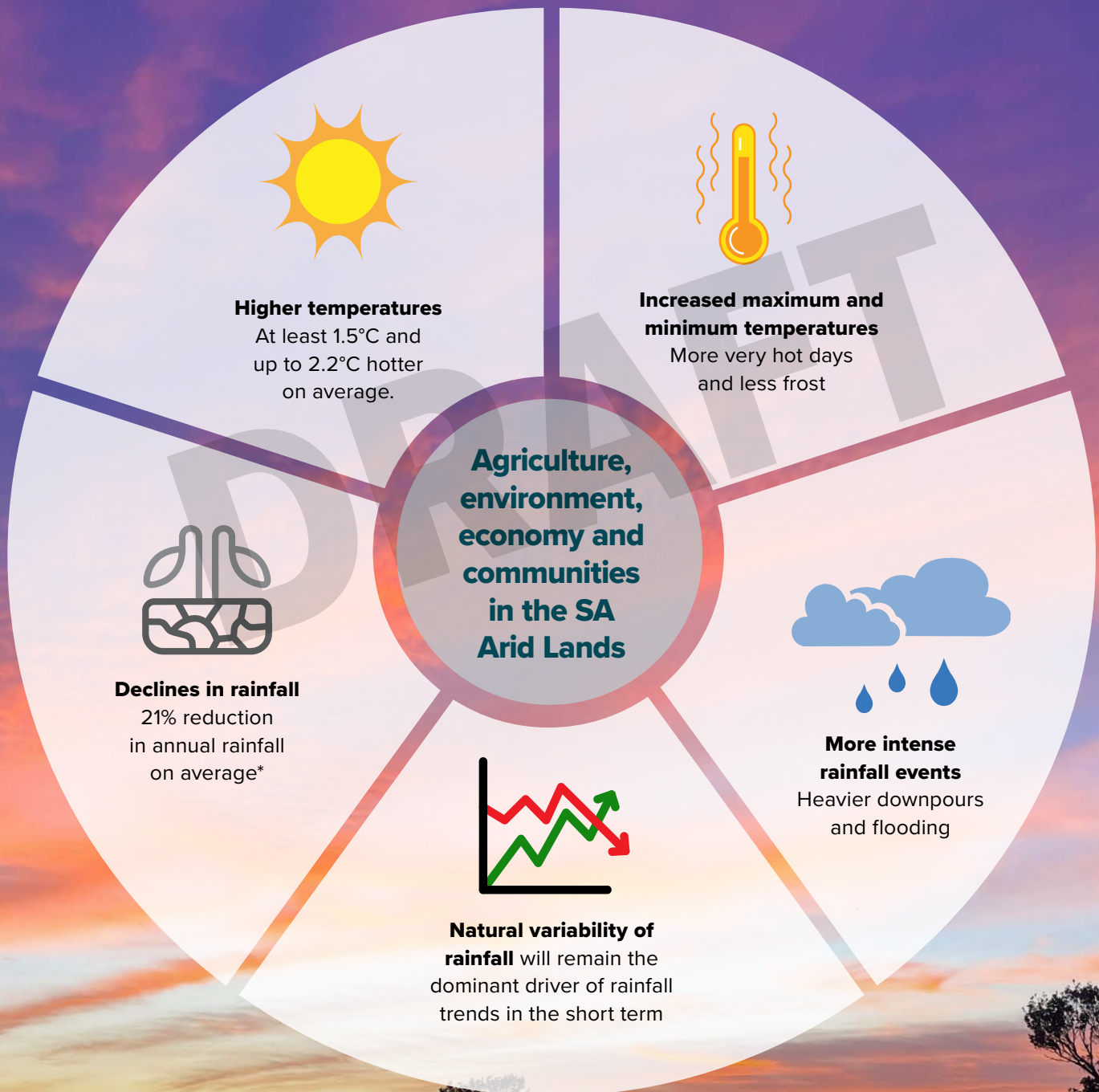
- Strengthen and grow networks and partnerships to deliver enhanced landscape benefits through strategic collaborations and co-investment.
- Prevent the incursion of exotic and introduced weeds and pest animals into biodiversity hot spots and protected areas

Key challenges for landscape management identified by the SA Arid Lands community^{4, 7, 8} include:

- **Managing total grazing pressure** from livestock and other herbivores, and adapting management to maintain land condition in a variable climate
- **Climate adaptation for** landscape resilience and ability to recover from more frequent and intense climate events, including drought, large rain events, flooding, bush fires, and heat waves
- **Water resource management**, including the judicious use of the Great Artesian Basin and other groundwater resources and improved capacity to measure its condition and supply
- **Declining water resources** and increasing demand
- **Pest animals and weeds** – existing and emerging
- **Diseases** – existing and emerging that impact native and domestic animals and ecosystems
- **Gaining social licence** to manage landscapes to support biodiversity and production outcomes in a balanced way
- **Advocacy for the region** with a small population and voter base
- Managing environmental and cultural impacts of **growing visitor numbers**
- **Contested land uses** and competition for finite natural resources

Climate Projections for South Australian Arid Lands

The Board is committed to working with community to build a climate resilient region that can adapt, innovate, prepare and respond to a changing climate.



*Data is based on a high emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) to 2040-2059 compared to the baseline 1986-2005⁹

Sunrise over Kokatha Country. Photo by Tori Love

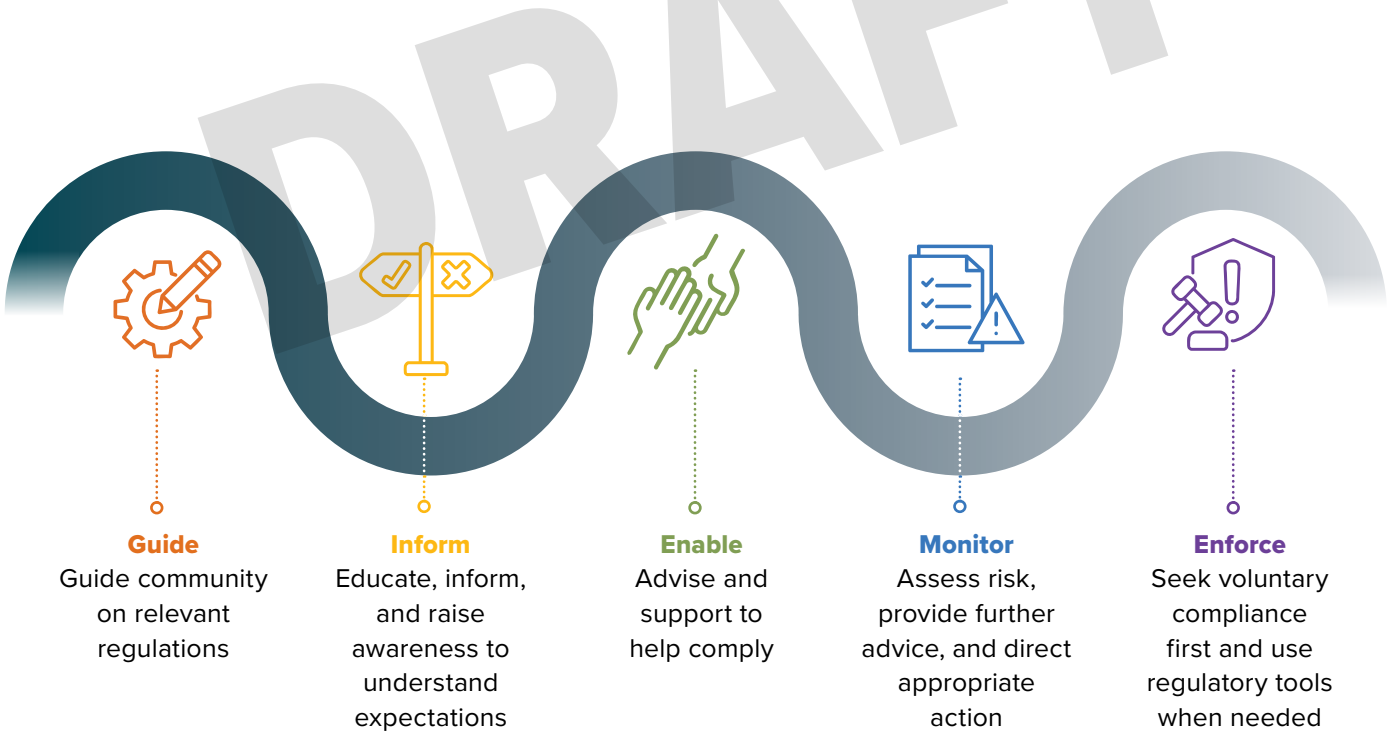
Role of the board

Under the *Landscape South Australia (LSA) Act 2019*, the board’s role is to undertake, promote and integrate the management of natural resources. In addition to land management, water resource management and pest animal and plant control, the goal of the board is to build resilience in the face of change and to facilitate integrated landscape management and biodiversity conservation, with community at the heart of decision making and planning.

A key function of the board is the development of a regional landscape plan (this plan). The board is also responsible for delivering a water allocation plan for prescribed water resources¹⁰. The board operates as the relevant authority and regulator for a range of water, land protection and management in addition to pest animal and plant control activities.

In collaboration with other agencies the board aims to integrate actions at a strategic, program, and project level, and advocates for the interests of the community and environment to enhance place based, regional and local outcomes.

Working with the community in delivering its responsibilities under the LSA Act, the board’s roles include education and awareness raising aimed at practice change and adoption, encouraging and supporting legislative compliance, and enforcement when needed. The compliance framework used is represented below.



The board's guiding principles

The Board:



Collaborates, and considers community values and involves people in decision-making



Facilitates resilient, integrated and adaptive landscape management



Is accountable, transparent, adaptive, innovative and action-oriented



Takes a best-practice systems approach to regional planning



Employs evidence-based decision making that incorporates the best available science, technology, local knowledge that improves understanding of landscape resilience



Prioritises Cultural knowledge and expertise in the planning and implementation of its initiatives



Maximises public return on investment



Complies with legislation

Pink Cockatoos (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*), Antakirinja
Matu-Yankunyjtjara Country. Photo by Tori Love

Landscape planning framework



Strategic alignment to:

- South Australian State Landscape Strategy
- Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust priorities
- South Australian Government Net Zero Strategy 2024-30
- Far North and Outback SA Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- Outback SA Drought Resilience Plan
- Local Government strategic plans
- Healthy Country planning processes

It is recognised that this plan aligns to a number of other national, state and regional strategies and plans, and vice versa.



South Australian Arid Lands Regional Landscape Plan

- Vision for the region
- 5 strategic priorities
- Board's focus areas

– 5 YEARS –

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework



Landscape Board Annual Business Plan

- Board income
- Investment priorities
- Key projects, services and partnerships
- Board staffing arrangements

– 1 YEAR –

Annual reporting



Key supporting resources:

- Far North Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan
- South Australian Arid Lands Water Affecting Activities Control Policy
- South Australian Arid Lands District Action Plans
- South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board Pest Management Strategy
- South Australian Arid Lands bioregional descriptions
- South Australian Arid Lands Biodiversity Strategy (in review)

National Tree Day event at Mannahill 2025. Adnyamathanha, Ngaduuri and Wilyakali Country. Photo by Alana Anderson

Delivery of this plan

The board's unique regional delivery model incorporates a community-led approach, with People and Partnerships central to successful program delivery in a diverse, remote, and sparsely populated region.

This includes the role of each of the region's seven district Landscape Groups which connect the community and the board, and support local relationships, access to education, capacity building, grants, community events and volunteer support.

The board's success is founded on relationships, including with:

- First Nations entities, ranger teams and communities;
- peak bodies and industry – including pastoral and livestock industry, tourism, conservation, mining and renewables;
- community and volunteer groups;
- education and research bodies; land managers
- local, State and Australian Governments and statutory authorities;

Each landowner in the SA Arid Lands pays a landscape levy and water licence holders pay a water levy, which the board has the responsibility of investing wisely to achieve the goals and strategies within this plan.

Using the land and water levies collected, the board can leverage significant funding and increased capacity for a range of priorities, including the Great Artesian Basin, Lake Eyre Basin, and mound springs, agriculture, and pest plant and animal control.

Funding agreements with the Australian Government and other organisations continue to resource significant elements of the board's plan and align with global and national environmental and economic priorities. Specific projects are outlined in the board's annual business plan.

The business plan provides information on the proposed annual expenditure against the board's regional priorities, investment obligations, legislated requirements, key delivery partnerships and the board's staffing arrangements.



2025 Indigenous Ranger Gathering at the edge of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, Arabana Country. Photo by Luke Sweet.



PRIORITY:

Climate resilient region

OUR GOAL: Resilient landscapes, communities, and enterprises are mitigating and adapting to climate change

The SA Arid Lands falls within the arid (<200mm/yr) and semi-arid (<350mm/yr) climate zones, with rainfall that is low on average, and highly variable and unpredictable between years and seasons³. While extended dry periods are common, testing both landscape and community resilience, sporadic large rain events and floodwaters can bring periods of high landscape productivity.

While local communities and industries are accustomed to these 'boom and bust' conditions, climate change presents additional challenges for the region. Rising temperatures, more frequent heatwaves and extreme weather, and the projected southern migration of arid conditions threaten community well-being, built infrastructure, landscape productivity, livestock health and production, and the health and persistence of native plants and animals, especially those already vulnerable due to other threats^{11,12,13}. Sea level rise has the potential to impact coastal communities, and increased nutrient loads and ocean warming threatens marine ecosystems, including seagrass beds, marine life and mangroves^{13, 14}.

Climate change presents a challenge for landscapes and communities in the SA Arid Lands. A shift to a low carbon economy will require testing of new methods for sequestering carbon and reducing net emissions from all industries and agencies. As part of the South Australian Net Zero Strategy, the board is committed to a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emission for operations by 2030 and net zero by 2050¹⁵.

Improving the resilience of the region's landscapes, community, industry and enterprises to climate impacts and their capacity to prepare and respond to change is a priority for the board. Climate influences all aspects of landscape management, and managing climate risk is embedded within all the board's priorities.

Focus areas – Climate resilient region

Planned 5-year outcomes

C1 Ensure climate risk is embedded in all board business

Program and project planning considers climate impacts on key landscape assets and values, and the effectiveness of management approaches and actions under future climates

C2 Provide land managers and community with the knowledge and skills they need to prepare, mitigate and adapt to climate change

Land managers and community have improved access to information on climate, innovative technologies and practices to assist their planning and adaptation

C3 Explore adaptation pathways to ensure landscapes and communities are climate resilient

Industry, research bodies, land managers, government and the board are working together to explore climate risks and opportunities for regional industries to respond to a low carbon future

Gawler Ranges landscape, Country of the Gawler Ranges People. Photo by Alana Anderson



PRIORITY:

People and partnerships

OUR GOAL: *People and community are central to looking after our landscapes*

The people of the SA Arid Lands region have a wealth of knowledge, history, tradition and expertise.

First Nations people have a deep connection to Country, with 18 First Nations groups in the region and a growing number of Indigenous Ranger teams caring for Country².

Families who have been managing the lands and pastoral enterprises for generations are resilient to the challenging lifestyle of the region. They bring histories and legacies fundamental to its sustainability.

The heritage and environmental significance of the SA Arid Lands is valued across Australia. Alongside First Nations, pastoralists and land managers, volunteers, visitors and the conservation sector are invested in, committed to, and passionate about protecting and carefully managing the region.

There are a number of threats to the resilience of the region's communities and businesses, including its remoteness, maintaining workforce and volunteer capability and succession, access to skills training, climate impacts, and mental well-being, which all influence people's capacity in land management^{4, 6, 12, 16}

People, the country, the landscapes, the communities and the industries are inextricably linked. It is because of this, the board recognises the immeasurable value that engaging with community brings to managing the region's landscapes and adapting to a changing climate.

The long term sustainability of the landscapes that support industries and communities is paramount to the board's decision making. Collaboration with the First Nations corporate and cultural authorities, industry peak bodies and sectors such as the environment, tourism, pastoral and mining leaders will hold the region and its communities in good stead for a sustainable future.

Focus areas – People and partnerships		Planned 5-year outcomes	
P1	Support First Nations partnerships for cross-cultural knowledge sharing and fostering Healthy Country outcomes	Strong partnerships support Healthy Country outcomes	First Nations people and communities are actively engaged in the design and delivery of projects and programs
P2	Foster a shared responsibility for landscape stewardship	Landscape Groups are supported to be leaders for community action and education.	Young people are inspired to care for our natural environment Caring for landscapes and sustainability is promoted as everyone's responsibility
P3	Raise awareness of the region's natural, heritage, and cultural values	There is a shared understanding of the importance of the environment, the threats it faces, and how people can take action	People's connection to nature is improved
P4	Support community action to achieve land, water and coastal management outcomes	Volunteer groups and community are supported with the board's resources and expertise, including Grassroots Grants	Community is engaged in monitoring and restoring the local environment through participating in programs such as volunteering and citizen science
P5	Foster, build and maintain strategic partnerships and investment to manage the regions natural resources	Stakeholders and the board are working together to manage and protect the regions natural resources	



PRIORITY:

Water management

OUR GOAL: *The region's water resources are managed judiciously*

Water is a critical resource in the SA Arid Lands. Natural springs, rockholes that fill after rain and semipermanent waterholes that fill during flood have sustained First Nation's people, and the region's cultural and environmental values for many thousands of years⁷. Groundwater supplies, including from the Great Artesian Basin, are the life blood of the region's communities and industries¹⁷. Over the past 200 years, numerous artesian bores have supported the expansion of pastoralism and mining in the region. Surface water varies in reliability across the region (being mostly unreliable in the north) but is also important for production and town supply in some areas¹².

Sporadic large rain events and associated flooding bring flushes of growth to parts of the region, resulting in increases in production and biodiversity. Waters from tropical storms to the north of the region fills floodplains and wetlands, and life to normally dry lakes, including Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre. This supports major breeding events for migratory birds, and is a drawcard for tourists¹⁷. The Lake Eyre Basin, one of four major surface water drainage divisions in the SA Arid Lands, is one of the world's last unregulated, wild river systems, covering almost one sixth of Australia⁵.

Key threats to water resources in the SA Arid Lands include: over-extraction of groundwater and surface water, aging infrastructure, contamination, lack of data on groundwater supply and extent, particularly outside the prescribed wells area, and climate change (hotter temperatures, increased evapotranspiration and long term reduction in rainfall leading to increases in water use, and potential decline in aquifer recharge)^{10, 11}.

Threats to water quality and ecosystem condition in terrestrial systems include trampling and contamination by livestock and pest animals, mining and tourism – particularly to springs, waterholes and creek lines¹⁷ – are addressed under *Priority – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity*.

Threats to water quality in the Spencer Gulf include ocean warming, pollution (plastic and nutrients), and other disturbances¹⁸. The board supports community action for coastal management outcomes – as addressed under *Priority – People and partnerships*.

Judicious use, or careful management, of water resources is required to prevent local impacts on water availability and quality that can result from excessive water extraction, and to balance the economic, social and environmental needs for water.

Focus areas – Water management

Planned 5-year outcomes

W1 Plan, research & leverage infrastructure investment to support the judicious use of groundwater

The Far North Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan is implemented

Improved understanding of groundwater dynamics to identify influences and limits on the resource

Co-funding opportunities for bore management and maintenance are explored and delivery supported

Capacity to monitor use and condition of groundwater resources is improved and protected

W2 Support the hydrogeological monitoring of Great Artesian Basin springs and other groundwater-dependent resources

Localised impacts of water extraction on water pressure are minimised, and the condition of priority natural springs and other water-dependent ecosystems are maintained or improved

Cultural knowledge and practice inform protection and management of Culturally Significant springs

W3 Understand and manage surface water systems including the Lake Eyre Basin

The board participates in the Lake Eyre Basin Alliance and supports the strategic adaptive management of the basin

The board has a comprehensive understanding of the region's surface water systems to guide policy and management decisions

Water Affecting Activities Control Policy is administered to ensure land managers remain compliant with managing surface water



Channel Country in flood, Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi Country. Photo by Charlie Eager.



PRIORITY:

Adaptive land management

OUR GOAL: *Land management practices protect soil, vegetation and biodiversity*

The region's landscapes (soils, waters, vegetation, species, human values and uses of the environment) are its 'natural capital'. Landscapes provide a range of ecosystem services, from the provision of food and fibre, to water filtration and storage, flood mitigation, carbon storage and pollination. They support extensive sheep and cattle production on native pastures (including a growing number of organic producers), mining and energy (mineral, gas, petroleum and renewables), biodiversity conservation, cultural values, eco-tourism and small townships.

Native vegetation of the Arid Lands region is for the most part intact (uncleared), though it has been modified by livestock and pest animal grazing since European settlement¹⁹. Many land systems have naturally low plant cover but are protected from wind erosion by their rocky nature or by living soil crusts (lichens and mosses) where these are intact.

“Soil health is the capacity of soil to function as a vital living system within ecosystem and land-use boundaries, to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality, and promote plant and animal health”²⁰

There are a number of issues threatening the condition of landscapes and the sustainability of landscape-dependent enterprises in the SA Arid Lands region. These include:

- Current climate variability, climate change and the capacity of pastoral and farming systems to adapt to change in conditions^{11, 12}.
- Overgrazing by livestock and other herbivores contributing to reduced ground cover¹⁹.
- Loss of deep-rooted perennials which can be through direct removal, damage and repeated defoliation by livestock and other herbivores, or prolonged drought^{19, 21}. Loss of perennial vegetation can decrease water infiltration and destabilise soils increasing the risk of wind or water erosion of soils²².
- Excessive total grazing pressure - from the combined impacts of over-abundant kangaroos, livestock and feral herbivores – leads to the decline or loss of palatable species, reduced soil cover, increased wind and water erosion risk, reduced landscape hydration, reduced capacity to recover after dry years, and long-term decline in landscape productivity. The effects of severe degradation may last for decades or longer, and affected areas may require active rehabilitation¹⁹.
- Pest animals (including wild dogs, foxes, cats, rabbits, goats, pigs, donkeys, wild horses and camels), are a landscape-scale issue, threatening production, biodiversity or cultural values, and require coordinated control²³. Their abundance and extent is influenced by extreme seasonal events, and climate change may result in a shift in distribution and new incursions. It is important to note that wild dogs have an ecological role and value, though are controlled inside the dog fence to protect the sheep industry²⁴.
- Pest weed species compete with native pastures and can reduce landscape productivity as well as contaminate animal products. The region contains a number of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) with potential to impact production²⁵.
- Inappropriate placement, construction or maintenance of infrastructure, such as roads, and pipelines, can alter surface drainage and lead to gully erosion and sedimentation of waterways²².

Livestock grazing in the Far North, Yankunytjatjara/ Antakirinja Country. Photo by Andrea Tschirner

Focus areas – adaptive land management		Planned 5-year outcomes
L1	Reduce the impacts of pest plants and animals on production systems	Landholders participate in coordinated control of priority pests and weeds, with a particular focus on: • wild dogs (south of the dog fence) • pigs; • feral herbivores (goats, camels, horses, donkeys, rabbits); and • priority weeds identified in the regional Pest Management Strategy, including Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) The policy and regulation is administered to ensure land managers remain compliant with their pest plant and animal control obligations
L2	Reduce excessive grazing pressure across all land tenures	Land managers, industry partners, government and the board are working together to reduce the impacts of over-grazing, with a focus on: • overabundant macropods; • livestock grazing practices; and • feral herbivores
L3	L3 Build land managers' capacity in adaptive climate smart agriculture, best practice land management and rehabilitation	Land managers are engaged in contemporary and innovative practices for rangeland management and rehabilitation.
L4	Build knowledge of practices to protect soil health and function	Soil condition and trends are measured and monitored to inform best practice management Soil health and functionality are protected and enhanced



Feral Goats (*Capra hircus*) in the Flinders Ranges, Adnyamathanha Country



PRIORITY:

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

OUR GOAL: *intrinsic biodiversity values are protected and enhanced*

The SA Arid Lands region hosts a diversity of rangelands ecosystems, and a wealth of plants and animals adapted to arid environments. It is home to a significant proportion of South Australia's reptiles (70%), birds (57%), frogs (50%) and mammals (50%), and contains ten major bioregions¹⁹.

Natural springs of the far north are oases in the desert; unique island ecosystems supporting some species that do not exist anywhere else. Semi-permanent waterholes also provide refuge for many species, and ephemeral lakes – when in flood – provide important breeding habitat for migratory birds⁵. The Coongie Lakes Ramsar wetland in the far north east of the region is a site of international significance^{26, 27}. The region also includes the marine and coastal environments of the upper Spencer Gulf, supporting seagrass and mangrove communities of ecological importance⁹.

While the SA Arid Lands has a high level of native vegetation cover (>95% by area)¹⁹, landscape modification since European settlement and the spread of pest species, have impacted many native species, reducing the number and extent of populations and causing local extinctions. Currently, 51 native species (24 animals and 27 plants) and two ecological communities in the SA Arid Lands landscape region are listed nationally as vulnerable or endangered^{28, 29}.

There are a number of key threats to biodiversity in the SA Arid Lands region:

- Predator pests (foxes, pigs and cats) that hunt small to medium-size animals^{30, 31}.
- Herbivore pests (goats, pigs, rabbits, camels, donkeys, horses) and livestock that compete with native species for resources and can degrade habitat, especially in sensitive areas such as springs, rockholes, waterways and wetlands^{17, 31}.
- Weed and pest animal incursion into biodiversity hot spots and protected areas³²;
- Aquatic pests, that compete with native species and degrade habitat and water quality³³
- Climate change impacts on biodiversity remain uncertain but are likely to be most severe for species that depend on riparian zones and wetland systems, and where populations are small, isolated or already vulnerable because of other threats^{30, 32}
- Loss of pressure in GAB springs due to local or regional over-extraction (addressed under *Priority – Water Management*)¹⁷
- Knowledge gaps – in a region as vast as the SA Arid Lands there are significant gaps in the knowledge of biodiversity values in many parts of the region. This limits the ability to manage potential threats to these values.

There are close links between the priorities Adaptive Land Management and Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity. Actions that improve land and pasture condition will also benefit biodiversity, and vice-versa.

It is recognised that best practice land management provides the basis for achieving landscape-scale biodiversity outcomes that help protect, manage and restore priority species and important natural places.



Australian Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*) near the Oodnadatta Track, Arabana Country. Photo by Alice Allington

Focus areas – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

Planned 5-year outcomes

B1 Manage and monitor key threats to identified priority natural and Cultural values

Threats from pests and weeds through landscape-scale control in areas of high conservation value are reduced, with a particular focus on:

- predator pests (particularly foxes, pigs and cats) and goats in the region's ranges;
- pigs and large feral herbivores in the Coongie Lakes Ramsar wetland and channel country;
- priority weeds including Weeds of National Significance; and
- feral herbivores

A new strategic document that provides a framework for the prioritisation and protection of natural values within the South Australian Arid Lands is developed and implemented

B2 Support threatened species and ecosystem recovery

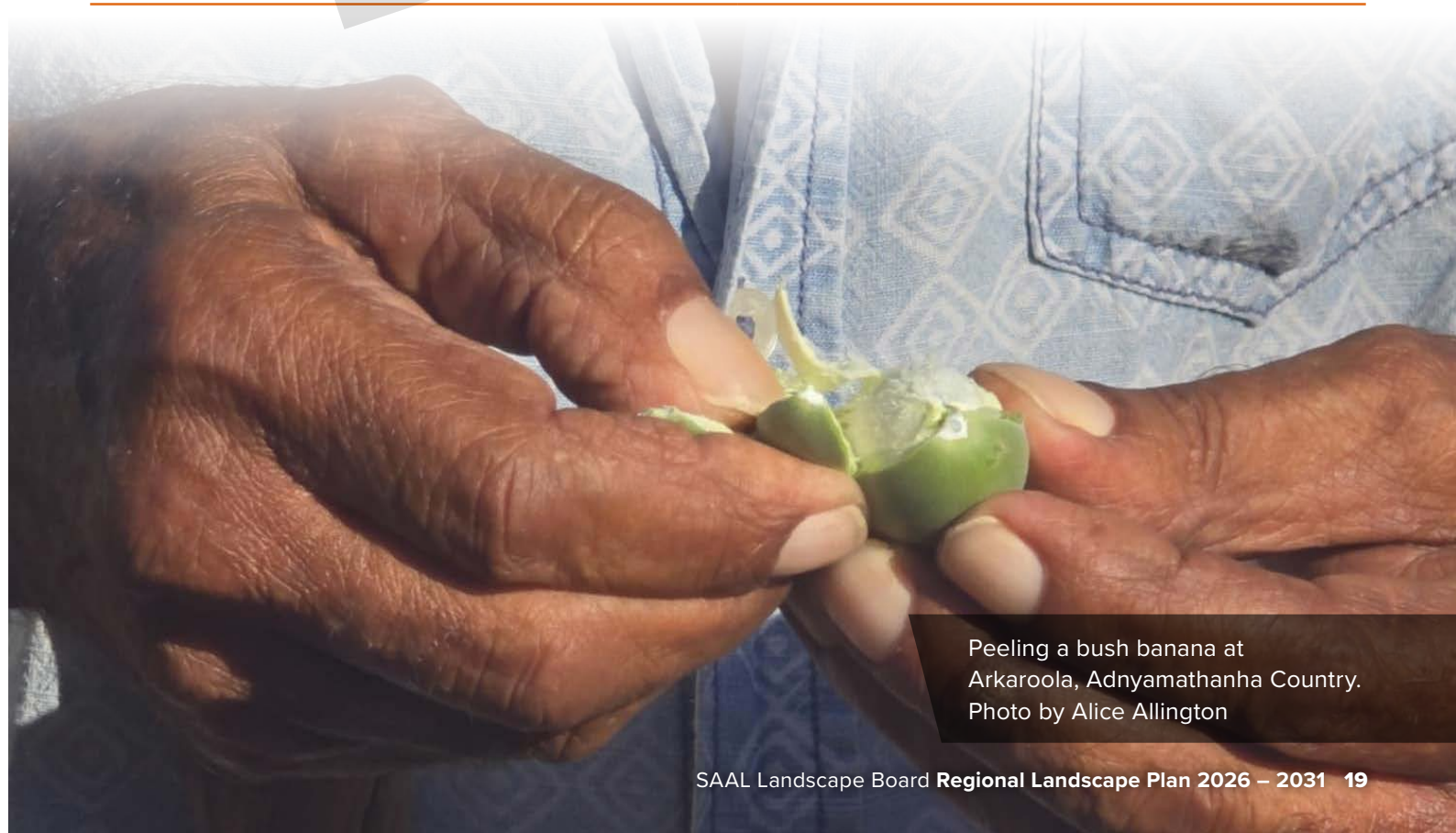
Trajectory of targeted threatened species and threatened ecological communities is better understood, through tailored site-specific actions and monitoring (In accordance with Recovery Plans and Conservation Advices for EPBC-listed species)

Improved understanding of biodiversity values in data-poor areas through partnerships and knowledge sharing

B3 Partner to maintain and improve the condition of the Great Artesian Basin springs and water-dependent ecosystems

Prioritisation of springs according to value and risk using the GAB springs strategic management plan¹⁷

Priority springs and water-dependent ecosystems, localised threats to condition are addressed through collaboration with landholders, volunteers and First Nations



Peeling a bush banana at
Arkaroola, Adnyamathanha Country.
Photo by Alice Allington

Evaluating the plan

- Annual achievements will be reported after the end of each financial year on the board's projects and programs
- Once within the five years of the plan, the board will evaluate how successful it has been in achieving the outcomes outlined against each of its priorities and focus areas
- A detailed monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and improvement framework will be developed and implemented to measure progress and evaluate success
- Learnings will be used to improve the board's program delivery and decision making

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Resources

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Desert Goby (*Chlamydogobius eremius*) in the Great Artesian Basin Springs, Arabana Country. Photo by Elisa Sparrow



Fleshy Groundsel (*Senecio gregorii*)
Mulyungarie Station, Wilyakali Country.
Photo by Ryan Hayward

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