

ACROSS THE

Edition 107

OUTBACK

APRIL 2025



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Presiding Member update

Welcome to the first edition of Across the Outback for 2025. There's plenty to catch up on in this edition and much to learn about the board's plans for the rest of the year.

We feature our most significant event of late, the SA Arid Lands Pastoral Field Day. It was a pleasure for the board to host and attend the event, which provided an opportunity to connect with the pastoral community and our many partners.

Thank you to the many who attended, to our exhibitors, the partners who co-funded the event and the team that worked hard to make it happen. It has provided a timely opportunity to network and bring the pastoral community together in Port Augusta.

The field day is one of many planned events and projects forming part of our board's Building Pastoral Sustainability (BPS) Program, developed for the pastoral region, community and land managers.

Please enjoy catching up on the range of other activities across the SA Arid Lands, where our staff are working with land managers in agriculture, reducing total grazing pressure impacts to build drought resilience, biodiversity and threatened species protection, and water management all while supporting communities to manage the many and complex matters that help us to protect and sustain our region.

Douglas Lillecrapp



General Manager update

As you are about to digest, the year has started with a flurry of activity, field work, project planning and delivery.

You may have attended our recent SA Arid Lands Pastoral Field Day. It has taken a great deal of effort, planning and coordination to stage this event and my thanks go to the whole SAAL team, contractors, and our many friends and partners for bringing this important event to life.

There are many stories and updates within this edition that will bring you up to speed on our breadth of work. This year we continue to work hard on the issue of total grazing pressure. One way we are supporting land managers to do this is through our continuation of the Building Pastoral Sustainability program focussed on ways to increase vegetation and remediate soil erosion.

Other ways are through water management and preventing extra mouths to feed. In line with our legislation, the management of feral animals, herbivores and pigs is high on the priority list and will see many control operations and collaboration with land holders to remove the extra grazing pressure at a concerning dry time.

The support for landholders in managing over abundant kangaroos, removing goats and preventing their re-release and collaborating with proactive land managers and partners to change our approach to these issues, are important projects you can learn more about here. As always, thanks for walking beside us in the management of our natural resources. We can only achieve our outcomes by working together. Our team looks forward to connecting with you in upcoming events, workshops and projects.

Jodie Gregg-Smith

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon. 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 with the First Nations People of the SA Arid Lands as we undertake our business on this shared and sacred country.

Cover image: *Grevillea Nematophylla*, Roxby Station. Photo by Tori Love.
Background Image: Oodnadatta Track, Isaac Forman, SATC
Artwork: Marika Davies

Soil health the focus of new Building Pastoral Sustainability program

Pastoralists will be supported to improve soil health and increase ground cover through the continuation of the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board's Building Pastoral Sustainability (BPS) program.

The flagship program, which started in 2020, is beginning its second phase based on the successes and learnings from its first three years, as well as the soils-focussed project From the Ground Up.

The new round of BPS aims to further strengthen pastoral businesses and increase economic resilience by supporting landholders to improve sustainable land management practices that improve ground cover and soils.

This will occur through training and workshops, designing action plans for soil and landscape management issues, and accessing funding to support on-ground works.

Pastoralists will be supported to increase their knowledge of soils and vegetation, as well as ways to reduce emissions and implement practices such as rotational grazing, soil erosion mitigation, and carbon accounting.

Building Pastoral Sustainability will work with pastoral businesses across the region to:

- Reduce the risk of soil loss by supporting improved land management practices;
- Increase awareness of climate variability;
- Understand soil composition and changes over time;
- Conserve and improve soil and vegetation by supporting the adoption of practices and techniques;
- Grow knowledge of natural resource management practices to support agricultural improvements and conserve the natural environment;
- Understand what technologies and practices are available to assist with adapting to a changing climate and reducing on-property emissions; and
- Build a pastoral network that encourages shared learnings between pastoralists.

There will be ongoing opportunities for the pastoral community to be involved in workshops and stickybeak days, bootcamps, field days, a bus tour and on-ground works and trials.

Keep an eye on the board's website for details about coming events at www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal

The Building Pastoral Sustainability project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program and delivered the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



Butterfly unique to SA

A butterfly, unique to South Australia is found in the SA Arid Lands region, but its dispersal is still largely unknown.

In collaboration with Green Adelaide and Entosearch, the SAAL team visited sites in the central flinders recently to look for and learn more about this butterfly.

The only butterfly believed to be totally endemic to South Australia the Waterhouse Hairstreak (*Jalmenus lithochroa*) occurs in small transitory colonies, with most of the older monitored colonies no longer existing.

The Waterhouse Hairstreak is dark brown with a metallic coloured patch in the middle of each wing that are green on the male and blue on the female.

The trailing edge of each hind wing has a thin tail, with two orange and black eyespots to either side that is visible on both the upper and underside.

Underneath, the butterflies are fawn with a number of arcs of fawn and white spots. They have a 3cm wingspan.



The Waterhouse Hairstreak butterfly is believed to be the only butterfly endemic to South Australia.

Historically the butterfly was recorded as two main populations – one in the Adelaide Plains region and the other in an area of the Mid North, Flinders Ranges and Olary Ranges.

While the southern population is presumed extinct, remaining colonies in the northern population are totally dependent on the Elegant wattle (*Acacia victoriae*) as a larval host plant and on the large ferocious meat ant as a larval attendant ant.

With the ant and host plant reasonably common, it is thought the butterfly should be widespread and stable, however the low number of active colonies would suggest the last drought caused a decline in the population, keeping butterfly numbers low.

If you think you have seen one of these butterflies, please contact the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board office on 8429 9666 or send an email to saallandscapeboard@sa.gov.au.

Program targets sustainable use of undersized goats

Uncontrolled feral goats are listed in the top five most threatening invasive species nationally due to their impact on native species and contribution to land degradation.

In South Australia feral or unmanaged goats are a declared species for control. Within the SA Arid Lands, feral goats continue to hamper both positive conservation and primary production outcomes.

A new project aims to use undersized goats that may not be suited for market, to protect native habitat and pasture, and utilise the protein source. A joint venture between Zoos SA and the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board (SAAL) will see the processing of undersized or unfit to load feral goats when mustered, to feed carnivores at Monarto Safari Park.

During this two-year project project, SAAL will work with landholders to support the removal of unfit to load and unmarketable goats following a harvesting operation.

This on-ground project aims to develop a pathway to assist landholders in the burdensome task of destroying unfit to load goats while offering a solution to minimise the wasted protein.

This project is one endeavour in an integrated pest management strategy that supplements control activities such as mustering and aerial control, collectively



Feral or unmanaged goats continue to hamper primary production outcomes and positive conservation initiatives.

aimed at reducing numbers of feral goats and their impact on the landscape.

Landholders and the wider community are asked to report feral goat sightings, damage and their management actions such as mustering with the Feral Scan app or by contacting the board.

This will help the board better understand where goats are impacting the landscape and determine where control measures are needed.

You can get involved in the *Sustainable use of undersized goats to protect native habitat and pasture project* by contacting the Rangelands Goat Management Coordinator Alex Scattergood at alex.scattergood@sa.gov.au or by phone on 0488 224 923.

This project has been funded by the State Government's Landscape Priorities Fund.

Get the facts on water

Have dry times made you think about desilting your dam or are you planning to construct a new dam to catch the water when it comes?

The SA Arid Landscape Board has released new four fact sheets for land managers and contractors with guidelines for:

- Desilting dams
- Contractor obligations when undertaking work in or near a watercourse
- General information about water affecting activities
- FAQs on water affecting activities



Before undertaking works on your dam, consult the board to understand your requirements.

The fact sheets can help land managers understand the requirements under The Landscape South Australia Act 2019 and SA Arid Lands Landscape Board's Water Affecting Activities (WAA) Control Policy, including activities that require a Water Affecting Activity (WAA) permit.

The fact sheets are available on the board's website.



New round of Grassroots Grants open

Almost \$150,000 is available in the sixth round of Grassroots Grants, which opened on Monday March 17.

Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for volunteer groups, schools and community organisations, recreational groups, property owners and individuals to undertake projects and activities to help build the environmental resilience and sustainability of the SA Arid Lands region.

Funding is available for projects between \$1,000 and \$20,000 (+ GST) for the 2025-26 financial year and will be awarded on merit to projects that demonstrate the best value for money and delivery of benefits in-line with SAAL Landscape Board priorities.

Grants can support activities such as revegetation, pest and weed control, training, citizen science, environmental surveys and community events.

Projects must align with at least one of the board's key priority areas: Climate Resilient Region, Water Management, Sustainable Land Management, Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and People and Partnerships; and demonstrate community benefit and value for money.

Applicants are encouraged to read the FAQs available on the board's website at [www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-involved/grants-and-funding/grassroots-grants)

[involved/grants-and-funding/grassroots-grants](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-involved/grants-and-funding/grassroots-grants), where you will also find details of projects funded in the past three grant rounds.

Applications in the current round of Grassroots Grants close at 4pm on Monday 12 May.



Magenta Williams (Nilpinna), Lucy Williams (The Peake) and Lara Bell (Dulkaninna) at Nilpena Ediacara National Park

SOTA Students enjoy Ediacara experience

Students from remote properties enjoyed the experience of a lifetime, visiting the world-renowned Ediacara fossil site at Nilpena.

Port Augusta School of the Air (SOTA) received funding in the 2024/25 Grassroots Grants to support additional activities as part of a school excursion. The grant provided an opportunity for students to visit Nilpena Ediacara National Park where they enjoyed an immersive experience at the Ediacaran fossil site.

Nilpena-Ediacara ranger-in-charge Kym Geue was joined by long-time property owner Ross Fargher to deliver insights about the site's prehistoric life.

They described the land as a living record of lifeforms and students learned how the fossils hold stories far older than human inhabitation, human discovery of the

world, how ecosystems evolve and the importance of understanding and caring for the land.

The experience aimed to foster an appreciation for land stewardship and a sense of responsibility to learn more about their connections with land, waterways and people.

Joint group meeting at Arkaroola

When two Landscape Groups are addressing similar issues, a combined group meeting offers an opportunity to collaborate to tackle issues.

This was the case when the North East Pastoral and Marree-Innamincka Landscape Groups joined for a meeting at Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary in February.

The combined meeting provided an opportunity for experts and community members to discuss feral pigs, wildlife management, conservation and the environment, while also connecting with

others passionate about environmental conservation and cultural preservation.

Joining the groups for the meeting was National Feral Pig Management Coordinator Heather Channon, who spoke about the environmental impact of the feral pest and spoke about strategies for their management.

Other guest speakers at the meeting were Sanctuary owner Doug Sprigg,

who spoke about his experiences in wildlife management and environmental conservation. Doug also treated members to a hands-on astrology experience under the stars.

Balcanauna National Parks and Wildlife Ranger Sian Johnson lead a cultural plant walk and talk, an engaging walk-through local flora, learning about traditional uses and the cultural significance of plants.



At the combined meeting of the Marree-Innamincka (MI) and North-East Pastoral (NEP) Landscape Groups at Arkaroola were, from left, back, Caitlin Duncan-Tiver (NEP), Mark Duncan-Tiver (NEP), Nick Rasheed (NEP), Lyn and Gordon Litchfield (MI), Tim Zwiersen (NEP), Kalkaroo environmental officer Geoff Borg, Innamincka ranger Paul McKinnon, National Feral Pig Coordinator Heather Chesson, SAAL Biosecurity Officer Chris Havelberg, front, NEP Community Landscape Officer Ryan Hayward, Doug Sprigg of Arkaroola, MI Community Landscape Officer Alice Allington, Innamincka Ranger Penny Kothe and Sharpie Coulthard.

SA rangelands in the world spotlight

The pastoral region, which is part of Australia's rangelands, is featuring on the world stage at an international conference in Adelaide.

Working together for our Global Rangelands Future is the theme for this year's International Rangelands Congress, held from 2-6 June.

Last held in Australia in 1999, the Congress involves the presentation of papers and reports, workshops and pre and post Congress tours.

It attracts people from rangeland communities throughout the world with an innovative program that challenges

values and the way people think about the rangelands.

Workshops for this event will tackle societal challenges for a sustainable future, focussing on recognising the critical value of grasslands and rangelands in development pathways and making informed decisions that drive effective practices and policies.

Twenty people from the region will be attending the congress, supported by

the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, the Pastoral Board and the SA Drought Hub.

Find out more about the International Rangelands Congress at <https://irc2025.rangelandcongress.org/>





Placing cameras at Mt Willoughby Station in March were, from left, Ranger coordinator Janet Walton, Rangers Wayne Willis, Paul Willis, William Lennon, Tjirilya Aboriginal Corporation chief executive officer Tim Haines, SAAL ecologist Elisa Sparrow and Bush Heritage Australia ecologist Ned Ryan-Schofield.

Using AI to track the Plains-wanderer

Acoustic devices that record bird calls at dawn and dusk have been placed on properties in the Marree-Innaminka, Marla-Oodnadatta, Gawler Ranges, Kingoonya and North East Pastoral districts with potential Plains-wanderer habitat.

At Mt Willoughby Station in the Marla-Oodnadatta district, three rangers, a ranger coordinator and the chief executive officer of the Tjirilya Aboriginal Corporation worked with SAAL staff and

Bush Heritage to identify suitable habitat and deploy song meters across the property in March.

It is hoped these devices will pick up the unique sound of a calling Plains-wanderer

female that can be run through computer software that can align its frequency to reference calls collected for this species.

In doing so, it is hoped the known range of the Plains-wanderer can be expanded.

Join the hunt for the Plains-wanderer

We're on the hunt for the elusive Plains-wanderer, a small ground-dwelling bird that lives in grasslands in south-eastern Australia and we want your help.

Potential Plains-wanderer habitat is land with vegetation that is typically low (10cm), sparse and consists of about 50 per cent bare ground and features plants including saltbush, namely copperbur and other *Sclerolaena* species, native herbs and small tussock grasses.

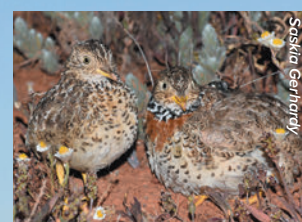
If you have habitat that fits this description, have seen one of these birds, or what you think could be one of these birds, we'd love to hear from you as part of our Citizen Science project.

You can access the project survey at <https://bit.ly/3YJAW52>.

Critically endangered, the population was thought to be less than 100 individuals until recently, when promising numbers from Boolcoomatta Reserve in the North East Pastoral district in 2023 widened the hunt.

Most often sighted at night, the Plains-wanderer grows to 19cm in height and weighs up to 95g. The female can be distinguished by a black and white speckled collar and red-buff spot on her upper breast. Both species have brown patterned plumage.

Plains-wanderer: Revisiting the Baseline is a project delivered by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, Bush Heritage Australia and Birdlife Australia through funding from the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program.



Plains-wanderer habitat has vegetation that is low, sparse and about half bare ground.



The board's Water Accounting project is measuring the water requirements of the region's livestock.

Water accounting trial expanded to three new sites

Three new trial sites have joined the Accounting for Groundwater Take project in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area.

The cattle grazing properties in the Marla-Oodnadatta and Marree-Innaminka districts began accounting trials for water consumption of cattle late in 2024, while the third trial site began monitoring sheep water consumption in the Marree-Innaminka district in March 2025.

One of the latest trial sites aims to monitor stock-per-capita water consumption of Angus cattle accessing non-artesian water. This trial is testing EcoSAT Gold water and tank level monitoring technology.

It will trial flow sensors, tank level sensors and rain gauges across three paddocks: monitoring more than 500 cattle with access to five water points. In addition, three Wp-Dynamic Turbine Pattern-approved water meters were also installed to investigate the reliability of metering technology and

water infrastructure in challenging arid conditions.

North of the dog fence in the Marree-Innaminka district, the second new trial is a multi-purpose artesian bore supplying water for stock, domestic, wetland and road maintenance purposes. Careful consideration in the design process was needed to ensure technology and water infrastructure was capable of withstanding extreme conditions, with temperatures exceeding 45C during the summer months.

This site will monitor cattle water consumption in one paddock, using Farmbot technology and Krohne hot pattern-approved water meters. These meters are capable of monitoring Great Artesian Basin groundwater up to 70C.

Also, in the Marree-Innaminka district, the third new trial site has begun monitoring sheep water consumption in one paddock. The landholders' existing relationship with Farmbot was utilised during the design process, helping the board to incorporate further innovative Farmbot technology with the aim of improving the landholders ability to remotely monitor stock water usage.

The Accounting for Groundwater Take in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area has now collected more than a year of landholder and telemetry data. All trial sites will continue to provide valuable insights for landholders, the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board and the Department for Environment and Water to better understand and manage water resources in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area.

Grants for GAB bores

Further security for water supplies in the Great Artesian Basin will come from a new water saving scheme supported by the Australian and South Australian governments.

The Great Artesian Basin Water Security Program (GABWSP) will receive \$5m from both levels of government to enable South Australian bore owners to apply for grants to complete capping and piping projects, designed to improve the health of the vital groundwater resources.

Each year, the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) loses an estimated 740,000ML of water from free-flowing bores. The new program will work to improve water pressure and safeguard the environment through the delivery of matched funding to Basin jurisdictions over four years from July 2024 to June 2028.

Through the program, the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board will work with the South Australian Government to better understand and improve the health of the vital GAB Mound Springs and improve their water accounting processes.

Landholders can apply for grants to rehabilitate, plug, pipe or replace old infrastructure attached to uncontrolled bores and bore drains.

The grants will cover up to 50 per cent of total eligible project costs.

The GABWSP will build on the success of past Great Artesian Basin programs including the Improving Great Artesian Basin Drought Resilience (IGABDR), Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative (GABSI) and the Interim Great Artesian Basin Infrastructure Investment Program (IGABIIIP). The programs have run since 1999 and were designed to reduce water wastage and improve the health of vital groundwater resources.

South Australian Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate, Environment and Water Susan Close said the funding was a great example of the Australian and South Australian governments working together to support South Australian residents to secure future water supplies.

"The Great Artesian Basin is one of our largest underground water sources and it is incredibly important that we ensure we reduce the amount of water lost from free-flowing bores by as much as possible."

Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek said protecting such an important water resource was an investment in Australia's future.

"I look forward to continuing to work with all our state and territory counterparts to ensure our water resources and our communities have a more sustainable future."

Find out more <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/monitoring/projects-and-activities/great-artesian-basin-water-security-program> or contact the board's senior water resource officer Aaron Smith at aaron.smith3@sa.gov.au or on 0417 643 956.



CHEMICAL HANDLING TRAINING AT MANNAHILL

Land managers in the North East were supported to gain accreditation in chemical handling, subsidised by the North East Pastoral (NEP) Landscape Group.

Identified as a priority in its District Action Plan, the Landscape group supported nine people to complete their ChemCert accreditation at the Mannahill Racecourse in February.

Chemcert Accreditation is valid for five years and training provides attendees with information on correct chemical transportation, storage, legislation, calibration, personal protective equipment, and various chemical types and uses.

NEP Community Landscape Officer Ryan Hayward said the course was a positive result for the district to provide greater awareness of safe chemical handling procedures and enable weed control for ongoing property management.



At the Mannahill training day were, Henry Francis, Nick Rasheed and Lane Hera-Singh.

LANDSCAPE GROUP NEWS

NORTH EAST PASTORAL

The North East Pastoral Landscape Group has organised a number of events for the district, and has more planned for the coming months.

At Bindarra in November, 29 attendees heard about sheep eID requirements, preparing them for the compulsory change that was introduced on 1 January. Also offered on the day were talks about carbon, wool staple testing and an update on the wool industry.

Nine locals attended ChemCert accreditation subsidised by the group and supported by the regional Landscape Levy.

Members travelled to Arkaroola for a combined group meeting with the Marree Innamincka Landscape Group in February. They heard from National Feral Pig Management Coordinator Heather

Channon at the event. The next group meeting will be held at Mt Victor Station on 13 May.

Coming events in the district include a two-day bootcamp at Mt Victor Station in May that will look at landscape rehydration with Lance Mudgway from the Mulloon Institute (see story in this publication) and a National Tree Day event that plans to rejuvenate the toilet block parking area at Olary with native trees and shrubs Sunday 27 July.

Ryan Hayward: 0459 762 603
Ryan.hayward@sa.gov.au

Photo: Geoff Borg, Doug Sprigg, Mark Duncan-Tiver, Caitlin Duncan-Tiver, Tim Zwiersen, Gordon Litchfield with Nick Rasheed, Sian Johnson and Penny Kothe sitting.



GAWLER RANGES

Landholders across the SA Arid Lands are enjoying *Plant Local*, a guide developed to showcase native plants for gardens and raise awareness of weeds in the Gawler Ranges district. Commissioned by the Gawler Ranges Landscape Group and written by Nadine Brown, the booklet lists plants that are weeds and offers a native alternative to plant in their place.

Volunteers treated the Pepper Trees along Depot Creek on Wilkatana late last year and will return again later in 2025 to continue the treatment. While the original infestation was treated by a contractor as part of a Grassroot Grant, all follow up treatment has been undertaken by volunteers.

A family golf day at Moongi was a huge success late in 2024, with Virtual Reality headsets, Animals Anonymous, Kimba Lions Club catering with funding from the



FRRR; while a plant propagation and bird workshop at Iron Knob was also well attended.

An additional FRRR-funded community event is planned for Iron Knob in June.

Across the district biocontrol has been used to control cactus with some good results, while other properties are hosting song meters as the board looks to expand the known range of the critically endangered Plains-wanderer.

The Gawler Ranges Landscape Group has met a couple of times since the last update, with the latest meeting held in Port Augusta in March.

Chris Fulton: 0477 307 038
Christopher.fulton@sa.gov.au

Photo: Amanda Michael, Phoebe Michael and Lesley Koch look at the *Plant Local* planting guide.



KINGOONYA

Kingoonya Landscape Group members joined a Citizen Science project at their March meeting when they buried cotton underwear in the top-soil of two sites to assess microbial activity. The outcomes of the 'soil your undies project' will be uncovered at a Landscape Rehydration Workshop, to be held at Kingoonya on 12 May.

During the meeting, members received an update on feral goat control programs from Rangelands Goat Coordinator Alex Scattergood, a sustainable agriculture update from the board's Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator Andrea Tschirner, and took part in a plant walk around Kingoonya with Andrea and Leesa from the Kingoonya Caravan Park.

At the December meeting, the group also met with Woomera Primary School staff to discuss plans for an outdoor education space featuring a bush food garden.

A snake awareness training session is planned; alongside raising awareness of invasive species through education.

The next group meeting is planned for 13 May. Details will be on the events page of the SAAL website.

Tori Love: 0408 807 498
Victoria.love@sa.gov.au

Photo: The board's Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator Andrea Tschirner talks about plants with Kingoonya Group members, from left, Conan Fahey, Eva Kozberski, Aaron Thomas, Leila Day, Nathan Manders and the Rangelands Goat Management Coordinator Alex Scattergood.



MARREE INNAMINCKA

Marree Innamincka Landscape Group members supported a third cat trapping event in the region, designed to minimise impacts of feral cats in townships. Held at Innamincka by the National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, Innamincka Progress Association and Outback Communities Authority, the exercise trapped five cats. The stomach contents and genetic samples of each have been sent to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for testing. Extreme weather conditions at the time of the operation are believed to have contributed to the low numbers. Further trapping events will be held to support the township and protect wildlife at the Coongie Lakes Ramsar area.

The group was represented at the Family and Nature Day at Innamincka, where North East Pastoral Community Landscape Officer Ryan Hayward delivered a Plant Propagation Workshop.

Landholders have received weed guides and biosecurity signs, sponsored by the MI Landscape Group.

The group's next meeting will be held online on Friday, 23 May.

Alice Allington 0436 403 682
Alice.allington@sa.gov.au

Photo: At Arkaroola for the joint meeting with the North East Pastoral were, from left, Paul McKinnon, Penny Kothe and Sian Johnson.

NORTH FLINDERS

The North Flinders Landscape Group met at Blinman in March, when members were updated on board programs, with a particular focus on the Idnya (Western Quoll) and goats.

Representatives of SA Water also attended in response to community concerns about water quality and supply. They spoke about groundwater source management, on-ground operations in the North Flinders and water supplies to indigenous communities.

Members also discussed ideas for 2025 that aligned with the District Action Plan.

At the December meeting, members farewellled board representative Kurt Tschirner, who has stepped down from his board position.

They also reviewed the successful Native Plant Propagation workshop in Hawker with Amy Morgan in November and spoke about the Carbon Workshop, which was held at Craddock in December.

Claire McKenry; 0439 051 085
Claire.mckenry@sa.gov.au

Photo: At the December meeting of the North Flinders Landscape Group were, from left, Kurt Tschirner, Alison Nunan, Mija Reynolds, Reg Wilton, Theres Bertram, Chris Ferguson, Gini Lee, Claire McKenry and Mopsy Daniels.



MARLA OODNADATTA

The Marla-Oodnadatta Landscape Group met at Cadney Park in February and were updated on the board's ecology programs in the region. A representative of the Outback Communities Authority also updated the group on unidentified cat management within the townships they manage.

The weed spray trailer unit was delivered to Coober Pedy and the Kanku Breakaways to help manage invasive plant species, such as Buffel Grass. Plains-wanderer songmeters were deployed on Mt Willoughby Station.

The group is planning subsidised grader accreditation in late May or early June and is also sourcing signage to

encourage travelling lightly in the region, to be placed at major rest stops.

Family Fun was brought to Oodnadatta in early April with a football clinic run by the Port Adelaide Football Club, a town walking tour and insights in native plant propagation with Dunjiba, yoga and music by Gavin Chandler.

The group's next meeting is planned for 26 May in Marla.

Tori Love; 0408 807 498
Victoria.love@sa.gov.au

Photo: At the Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group meeting at Cadney Park in February were, from left, William Lennon, Paul Willis, Tim Haines, Wayne Willis, Tori Love, Ned Ryan Schofield and Paul Quinn.

PORT AUGUSTA-QUORN

Nature education, and pest plants and animals are the focus of activities planned by the Port Augusta-Quorn Landscape Group.

The themes were set as part of the group's District Action Planning in 2024, which set out activities and the group's focus for the coming year.

The group has approved the continuation of the Growing Native Gardens project, which has been offered in the district for the past two years. The project provides schools and community groups with funding to obtain \$300 of native plants to beautify their grounds.

School incursions by the Marine Discovery Centre (MDC) happened at local schools in April, supported by the Landscape Group. While in Port Augusta, the MDC also

ran a Science of the Sea event in Port Augusta, supported by the Port Augusta Coastcare.

The group has one vacancy and community members are invited to join current members Renata Hackett (chair), Jeff Bowey, Rebecca Buono, Francene O'Connor and Pauline Zanet by applying as part of the current membership call.

Brett Devitt 0409 753 495
Brett.devitt@sa.gov.au

Photo: Port Augusta-Quorn Landscape Group members look at some of the board's new publications. They are, from left, Jeff Bowey, Francene O'Connor, Kangaroo Partnerships Coordinator Cassia Paragnini, Renata Hackett, Brett Devitt and Rebecca Buono.



Exploring pathways for Roo management

The Kangaroo Partnership Project (KPP) is working with stakeholders to develop projects to sustainably manage kangaroos. This follows an expression of interest (EOI) process which has seen six projects developed and due to start in May.

If you didn't lodge an EOI but have a proposal for managing overabundant kangaroos contact Kangaroo Partnership Project Coordinator Cassia Paragnani, to discuss how projects or ideas may be supported in the future.

The KPP has an integrated and community minded approach to

achieving the desired outcomes of managing the impacts caused by kangaroo overabundance.

The grants were offered with support from the South Australian Government's Landscape Priorities Fund and the South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

KPP PARTNERS WITH NRM REGIONS AUSTRALIA

The Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions Australia has teamed up with the Kangaroo Partnership Project to bring together NRM organisations from across Australia to discuss the current situation regarding kangaroo overabundance.

The partnership is designed to offer a place of support, information sharing and learning opportunities for NRM representatives who regard the 'wicked' issue of macropod overabundance as critical to the health of Country.

The membership incorporates NRM representatives from Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

Attendees at the latest meeting learned from Australian National University's Prof. George Wilson and Jess Bracks, who provided a summary of why kangaroo management is important and some of the differences between states in their management strategies.

The high participation and interest in the partnership relates to the increasing concern across Australia about the problem.

For more information on the KPP visit <https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/projects-and-partners/projects/kangaroo-partnership-project>



Landscape groups link communities to the board

If you have an interest in supporting natural resource management in your district, applications are now open to fill vacancies in six of the board's district-based Landscape Groups.

A Landscape Group provides an essential link between local communities and the board. The groups exist for each of the seven districts across the SA Arid Lands region, based in the Gawler Ranges, Kingoonya, Marla-Oodnadatta, Marree-Innamincka, North East Pastoral, North Flinders and Port Augusta-Quorn.

Landscape Groups are skills based, and members are selected for the knowledge of areas such as conservation, Aboriginal heritage, primary production, mining, tourism, water resources management,

pest animal and weed control, and local governance.

They are actively engaged with the delivery of local NRM projects and in developing District Action Plans that guide the work of each group and achieve outcomes in line with the board's strategic plan. They are also the voice of the community in the management of the district's natural resources issues.

A small number of vacancies exist in the Marla-Oodnadatta, Marree-Innamincka, Port Augusta-Quorn, Gawler Ranges,

Kingoonya and North East Pastoral districts. Applications opened on 31 March and will be accepted until 4pm on 12 May.

To find out more about the work of the groups and what becoming a member involves speak to your district's Community Landscape Officer.

Find out more and nominate at www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/about-us/our-board/Landscape-groups



THE ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

The Aboriginal Engagement Network, supported by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board (SAAL), held its latest meeting at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in March.

The members heard about projects and activities happening around the region and upcoming opportunities to work together.

The network is governed by a Terms of Reference which was also updated at the meeting and endorsed by the Board at its March meeting.

At the meeting were (from left) Joshua Haynes chair of the Marree-Innamincka Landscape Group, Alice Smith (SAAL), Tanya McKenzie from National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, Cherie Gerlach (SAAL), Tori Love (SAAL), June Lennon as a member of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee, Reg Wilton a member of the North Flinders

Landscape Group, Katie Perry and Warren Milera from Nature Foundation's Kids on Country™ Program, Frank Warren a member of the Marree-Innamincka Landscape Group, Dale Dadleh from The Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, Cherie Rolfe from Gawler Ranges Ranger program, Chris Fulton and Ryan Hayward both from SAAL.

SA Arid Lands Pastoral Field Day a resounding success



Above: Kokatha Pastoral's Jolene Wagner, Shaqkodon Warren, Zak Johnson-Thomas, Graham O'Toole, David Brady, Allan Wallace and Adam Wagner enjoyed the day.

Right: Bill Willoughby's demonstrations were popular.



Above: Tilly Tjala Thomas welcomed everyone to Nukunu Country before providing the lunch time entertainment.

Right: SA Arid Lands Landscape Board general manager Jodie Gregg Smith, Livestock SA chief executive officer Travis Tobin, Pastoral Board chair Roger Wickes, Outback Communities Authority Managing Director Marg Howard and Pastoral Unit manager Saravan Peacock.



Above: David, James and Megan Henderson of Kokatha Station and Scott Michael of Carriewerloo.



More than 600 people experienced the second SA Arid Lands Pastoral Field Day at the Port Augusta Racecourse in March. The event included 54 different stalls, eight presentations and five demonstrations that included cooking with kangaroo and goats, dispersive soils with Michael Ayers, snake awareness with Julian Craig and a native plant workshop with Markus Hammence.

School of the Air students joined a specially-designed program of activities in the afternoon. Highlights of the day included a panel session featuring representatives from the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, Pastoral Board, Livestock SA and the Outback Communities Authority; a fashion parade featuring merino wool and the joint pastoral ICPA dinner, which rounded out the day.



Above: Julian Craig's snake awareness workshop was well attended.
Below: Emcee Annabelle Homer talks to local designer Nikki Atkinson about the use of merino wool in her fashion designs.



Below: Pamela Cuffe, Nikki Atkinson, Layla Willmore, Amanda Michael and Katrina Morris.



Above: Nutrien Ag Solutions' Mark Williams, Cameron Naismith and Lucy Graetx were at the field day.

Below: Board staff Alana Anderson and Riley Fisher discuss scats and tracks with School of the Air students.



AERIAL OPERATION REDUCES FERALS

A combined effort to control feral herbivores in remote and difficult to access areas of the Central and Northern Flinders Ranges took place in March.

The SA Arid Lands Landscape Board partnered with the Department for Environment and Water team to remove almost 2000 feral herbivores on national parks and private lands.

DEW's aerial marksmen team removed 1750 feral goats and 200 donkeys from highly sensitive habitat for endangered Idnys (Western Quoll) and for vulnerable populations of Yellow footed Rock wallabies.

These areas are of increasing significance to the broader environment and agricultural systems with surface water springs, rocky slopes and hilltops acting as vegetation refuges for both native animals and livestock.

With feral goats having a similar feed requirement to meat sheep and donkeys, and consuming similar vegetation amounts to small cows, the grazing pressure of almost 2000 of these feral animals would have had significant impacts on the unique vegetation communities and waterbodies in the area.

The SAAL Board encourages any landholder who is struggling to meet their requirements to manage feral animals to contact board staff to discuss management options and available support.

The SAAL Board acknowledges the significant funding and management effort made through DEW's Bounceback Project, with additional areas of control made possible with State government funding through the SAAL Board's Resilient Rangelands Project which is funded through the South Australian Government's Landscape Landscape Priorities Fund.



African rue

The risk of spread by the declared weed African rue (*Peganum harmala*) has been reduced in the North East Pastoral district after a landholder reported an incursion.

The SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Landscape Board was able to respond with a contract spray company to undertake control work and the timing was perfect, just after rain when the weed was at its juvenile stage.

African rue is a declared perennial herb that flowers in late spring to early summer, and usually after rain. It can be identified by cream coloured, five-petaled flowers, red seed capsules and leaves divided into narrow straps.

An unpalatable shrub with a bitter smell, African rue invades pastures and rangelands and is toxic to livestock. It spreads predominately through seed, with the majority dropped close to the parent plant. Seeds can also be easily dispersed through water flow, and in mud moved by animals or vehicles.

Once control of African rue is undertaken, follow up control is required due to the plant's deep root system.

Care needs to be taken not to disturb or move root material. The board is planning follow up control later in 2025.

In the SA Arid Lands, the weed must be controlled and must not be transported or sold. Landholders with known infestations of African rue are also required to notify



the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board on 8429 9666 or at saal.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au.

You can find more information about African rue and its control measures on our website at Landscape South Australia - SA Arid Lands | Pest plants.



CONTROL WORK PROTECTS KOWARI HABITAT

Habitat of the critically endangered Kowari and ground-nesting migratory birds have been protected in a week-long aerial control operation at the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Wetland and surrounds.

Held during November in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service SA Rangers, aerial marksmen, and pastoral properties, the operation was designed to reduce the grazing impact of feral pigs, camels, donkeys and horses along the Cooper Creek and at the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Wetland.

These feral species pose significant grazing, erosion and predation threats to native species and cause damage to significant cultural and historic sites.

They are also a major spreader of diseases that pose a threat to livestock and human health.

While the season's good rainfall and flood conditions have promoted native vegetation growth and improved stock feed, these conditions also resulted in an increase in feral herbivores.

The operation controlled 263 horses, 260 pigs, 42 camels and four donkeys, with the removal of the horses alone preserving up to three tonnes of dry native vegetation in the landscape each day.

The Coongie Lakes Ramsar site is a mosaic of floodplain and dune field areas, almost two million hectares in size. It meets seven of the nine Ramsar listing criteria for international significance. The Cooper Creek is also recognised as one of the largest and few remaining unregulated river catchments in the world.

The work was undertaken as part of the Wetland Wonders project, which is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board as a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



Pig trapping at Boolcoommatta caught a sow with piglets and a large boar.

Fast action tackles pigs

Pig traps and monitoring were the key to a quick response to feral pigs in the North East.

Boolcoommata manager Tim Zwiersen knew it was important to act quickly when signs of feral pigs were noticed on the North East Pastoral property.

Rains brought favourable conditions for pigs to Boolcoommata's creek line flood outs, and as a result, Tim said there was an increase in pig sightings.

"Initially we thought the pigs were transient, however we knew we were in trouble when a sow with piglets was sighted," he said.

Staff deployed camera traps around diggings and water points to identify numbers and presence and then set three traps – two new Trackers traps and an

existing trap with a curved mesh design.

"Choosing the height of summer to set the traps, we quickly caught 13 pigs, including a sow with a piglets and a large 120kg boar," he said.

"Post-trapping camera monitoring has revealed only two young boars, and these were only sighted once suggesting that they were passing through.

"We feel we have effectively removed our resident pig population. The traps were very effective taking all the pigs, and the gate spring tension meant that even small pigs could push their way in easily, unlike other designs."

Mulloon workshops

If you use a grader or have an interest in soil erosion and plant germination, two workshops planned for May will give you the information you need to plan landscape rehydration measures on your property. Join the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board and the Mulloon Institute to understand rehydration principles to improve station productivity and drought resilience.

Both workshops will be run by Lance Mudgway from the Mulloon Institute.

Lance has a passion for working in arid rangelands and mentoring land managers to restore and rehabilitate natural water flows.

KINGOONYA, TUESDAY 12 MAY

A one-day workshop will provide an introduction to landscape rehydration.

Participants will learn how to read and interpret pastoral landscapes, the fundamentals of water moving across country, how to assess the landscape function and explore landscape rehydration options.

Attendees will hear about ways to practically apply concepts when operating machinery, planning fence lines, track improvements and managing livestock.

During the lunch break, a casual Carbon: What you need to know session will be presented by the board's Carbon Outreach Officer Jade Leyden.

MT VICTOR STATION, NORTH EAST PASTORAL 14–15 MAY

A two-day bootcamp experience, this builds on previous landscape rehydration experience. The course has been designed for people with an understanding of landscape rehydration principles and is a skills-based course to help improve landscape function.

Through activities that blend scientific principles and practical skills, participants will learn how to identify and prioritise issues to make real changes to the way water influences a property's viability; and sound planning and design principles to give a landscape rehydration project the best chance of success.

Numbers are limited at both workshops.

More information on the workshops and how to register is available at <https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/events/landscape-rehydration-workshops>

These workshops are supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program and the South Australian Government's Landscape Priorities Fund and is delivered by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



5 APRIL

Oodnadatta Family Fun Day

30 APRIL – 1 MAY

SA Arid Lands Landscape Board meeting 30

6 MAY

Plant Propagation Workshop, Quorn

12 MAY

Introduction to soil rehydration workshop, Kingoonya

12 MAY

Carbon – What you need to know, Kingoonya

13 MAY

North East Pastoral Landscape Group Meeting 54, Mt Victor

13 MAY TBC

Kingoonya Landscape Group Meeting, 76

14-15 MAY

Soil Rehydration workshop, Mt Victor

23 MAY

Gawler Ranges Landscape Group Meeting 71, field tour

23 MAY

Marree-Innaminka Landscape Group meeting 85, online

26 MAY TBC

Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group meeting 81, Marla

26 MAY

Regenerative Grazing Workshop, Port Augusta-Quorn district

26 MAY

International Rangelands Congress tour dinner, Marla

30 MAY

Port Augusta-Quorn Landscape Group Meeting, Port Augusta

JUNE TBC

Snake Awareness Workshops, Iron Knob and Kingoonya district

27 JULY

National Tree Day event, Olary

AUGUST TBC

Carbon Workshops, Gawler Ranges and North Flinders districts

SEPTEMBER

Spring bait injection services, south fence districts



BITEBACK NEWS



Changes to reporting procedure

Paper maps for landholders to record wild dogs on their properties and stock losses have been phased out.

Delays in receiving information of up to six months after incidents occurred and the decline in the use of paper maps by land managers as they report more on the online FeralScan website and app, led to the decision by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board.

The board now uses only FeralScan, which allows it to respond as incidents are reported and enables its biosecurity officers to better support landholders experiencing attacks from wild dogs. The information in FeralScan is used to guide wild dog control.

Reporting wild dog impacts benefits land managers and their neighbours when incursions are experienced on the ground

by alerting of dog activity.

Along with wild dogs, FeralScan is also useful to report incidents of feral herbivores, including camels, goats, pigs, horses and donkeys.

To find out more go to feralscan.org.au

Contact the board's biosecurity officers Chris Havelberg and Riley Fisher if you have Feral Scan questions on 8429 9666.



Public access routes being reviewed

The long term management of Public Access Routes (PARs) in South Australia is currently under review.

It follows reports received by the Pastoral Board over the past few years that identified challenges and opportunities for improved PAR management.

The need to sustainably manage the network followed extended closures in 2022 due to rainfall events that caused considerable damage. The damaged PARs have now been repaired, with Walkers Crossing on the Birdsville Track reopening in November 2024.

The Department for Environment and Water is reviewing the management of Public Access Routes (PARs) to help achieve more sustainable, long-term management.

DEW will review past consultation on PARs and will consult with key stakeholders to ensure their views and ideas are heard.

The discussion paper will seek input from lessees with PARs, route users, industry and tourism bodies.

The feedback received will inform future recommendations for PAR management.

From time-to-time additional PARs may be temporarily closed due to significant rainfall and flooding making access unsafe to users.

To ensure you are up to date with temporary closures, please check www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads



Autumn baiting services

Data reported to the board for January 2025 shows an increase in dog numbers for the same period over the past three years. This includes dogs sighted, impacts to sheep and those shot and trapped. A majority of these were in the North Flinders district.

It is a reminder to not be complacent about wild dog control and to ensure property scale control occurs.

Coordinated injection services were completed for all inside fence groups during March and early April. If you require baits and did not make it to one of these services, please contact the board's biosecurity officers Chris Havelberg and Riley Fisher on 8429 9666.

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Across the Outback is prepared and edited by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

PLEASE CONTACT

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Grey-headed flying fox.
Photo: Craig Greer

Bats find new home in the Outback

Grey-headed flying foxes (GHFF) (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) are the only endemic flying-fox species in Australia and one of the largest bats in the world.

A nationally threatened species, the Grey-headed flying fox's range is throughout eastern and southeastern Australia, including SA, Victoria, NSW and into Queensland. It is considered vulnerable due to concerns over its declining population.

In 2024, there was a notable expansion of the known range, with new observations in many regional centres. These included in some arid areas of the State, in places such as Port Augusta and Roxby Downs, the central Flinders Ranges and on the far west coast, including Nullarbor Plain.

This expansion was believed to be due to the species travelling much further afield in the search of food. With a changing climate, this expansion is likely to continue and GHFF may visit more unusual locations as the productivity across their range becomes more variable.

The GHFF feeds primarily on Eucalypt blossom, but it also consumes a wide variety of fruit. It plays an important role in ecology as long-distance seed dispersers and pollinators.

As a species, the GHFF is most at threat due to the loss or degradation of its foraging and roosting habitat. Other threats include fires, conflict with humans, electrocution on power lines and entanglement in barbed wire or netting.

Extreme weather events are also a concern, with temperatures above 42 degrees known to directly impact the GHFF survival.

If you see the GHFF or any bat, either dead or alive, please be aware they can carry a range of diseases and should not be handled. Instead, contact Bat Rescue SA on 0475 132 093 or Fauna Rescue on 8486 1139 for support.

You can also upload a photo to the citizen science app *iNaturalist* to help scientists map changes in the species' distribution across South Australia.



TOURISM APP

A tourism app developed in response to concerns raised by the Marree-Innamincka Landscape Group was launched at the South Australian Caravan and Camping Show in February.

The app has transformed the Legendary Tracks publication, now delivering it in a form that once that, once downloads, is interactive, helping travellers understand and appreciate the history and natural elements of the environment they are in. The app will work while out of mobile service range.

Free on both apple and android devices, the app gives relevant photos, fauna and vegetation information about an area as travellers pass through.

It was developed after the Marree Innamincka Landscape Group included tourism impacts in its District Action Plan.

The app is seen as a more sustainable way to educate tourists on outback etiquette, travel tips and places of interest, so they can keep the outback beautiful while enjoying a safe and memorable trip.

