

Closing the Gap in action

Landscape board case studies demonstrating progress towards SA's Closing the Gap priorities

Landscape Boards of South Australia | September 2026



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Acknowledgement of Country

South Australian landscape boards acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their 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. We work in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and support their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.

*Cover page illustration: Marika Davies
Image: Destination Riverland*

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Purpose of this report

Every Landscape Board in South Australia undertakes significant work with local Aboriginal communities, Traditional Owners and Prescribed Body Corporates. From governance and strategic leadership at Board and Chair level through to on-ground partnerships and project delivery, landscape boards are committed to working collaboratively with First Nations peoples to achieve shared outcomes.

This report highlights the substantial contribution landscape boards and their First Nations partners are making towards South Australia's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board,

on behalf of all landscape boards, has been working with Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to explore how the breadth of this work and its outcomes can be better recognised and captured within the state's measurement of progress towards Closing the Gap goals.

The following case studies provide a snapshot of the many partnerships and initiatives being delivered across South Australia, demonstrating how landscape boards and Aboriginal communities are working together to advance the Closing the Gap reform priorities.

Closing the Gap - South Australia's implementation plan

2024 – 2026 priorities

Priority reform

1

Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

Priority reform

2

Building the community-controlled sector

Priority reform

3

Transforming government organisations

Priority reform

4

Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Who are SA's landscape boards?

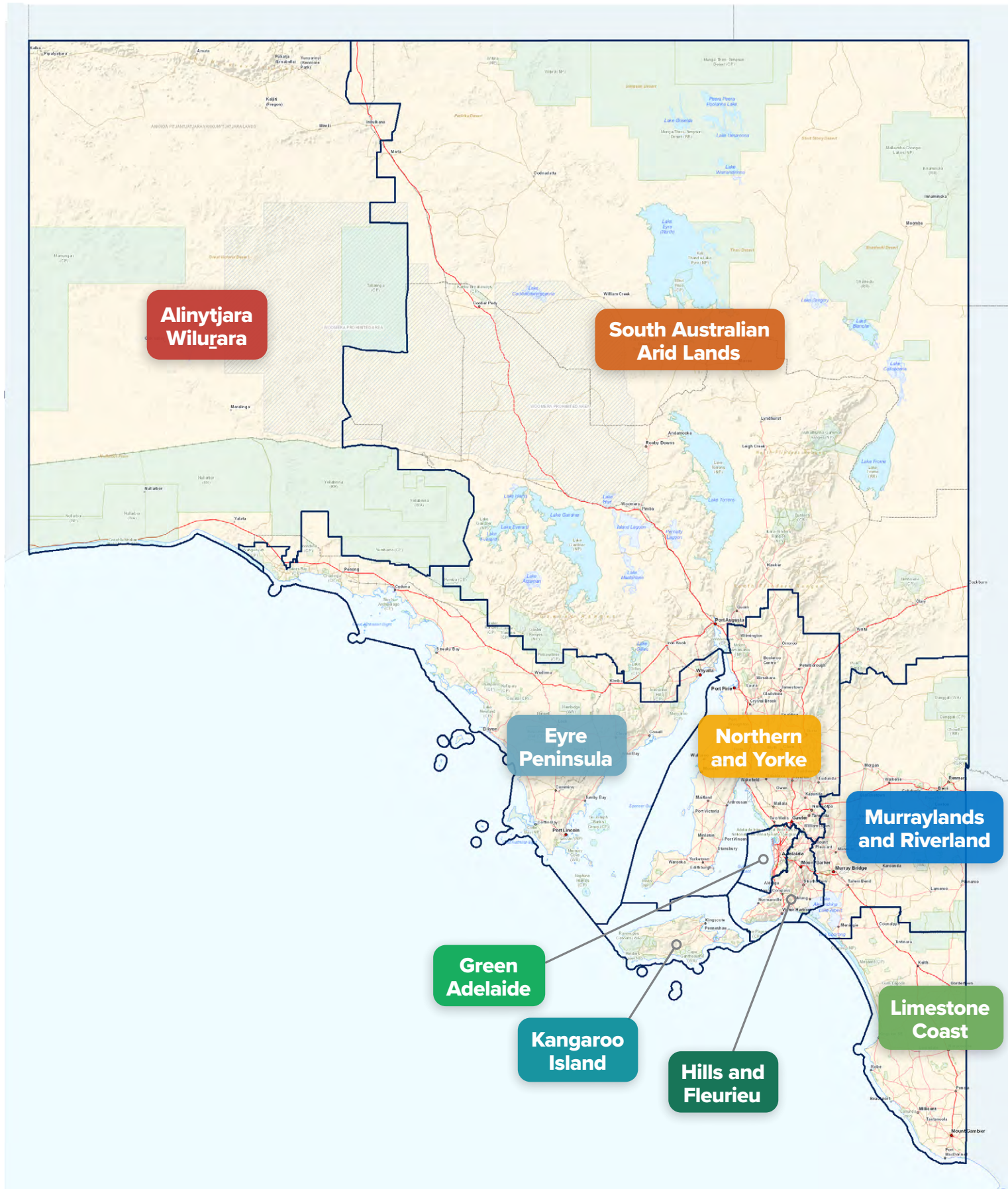
Landscape boards are statutory bodies governed by the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* and appointed by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water.

Eight regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide work with partners to deliver practical, on-ground programs that improve the health, sustainability and productivity of South Australia's landscapes. They invest landscape levies into regional priorities and leverage Australian Government funding towards managing and protecting our productive and natural landscapes.

The Landscape SA system includes the State Landscape Strategy, a Grassroots Grants program in each region, and the flexibility for levy funding to be distributed from Green Adelaide to regional South Australia through the Landscape Priorities Fund.

The Department for Environment and Water supports the Landscape SA system by leading the development of the State Landscape Strategy, administering the Landscape Priority Fund, policy and program work (such as water allocation planning) and advising the Minister and boards on the application of the Act.





Landscape board regions

Statement of Commitment

Landscape SA Board's **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders



Country—encompassing land, water, and sky—is important to all people.

Landscape boards acknowledge that, for Aboriginal peoples, Country is more than the physical environment. It includes cultural identity, ancestry, spirit, creation stories, knowledge systems, and lore, reflecting deep and ongoing relationships that have been sustained over time.

Caring for landscapes cannot be separated from the relationships between people and Country. Through respectful, two way knowledge sharing, learning together, and ongoing dialogue, landscape boards aim to work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples to care for, protect, and restore Country.

This commitment is guided by shared priorities at both state and national levels, including Closing the Gap, reconciliation principles, and aligning with the Department for Environment and Water's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

Across the nine Landscape SA regions, there is a rich diversity of cultures, histories, and knowledge systems. There is no single approach to working together. Collaboration is shaped by local contexts, relationships and governance. While this Statement of Commitment outlines guiding principles at a statewide level, each Board continues to develop and strengthen region-specific partnerships, structures and approaches that support meaningful outcomes with Aboriginal communities.



PARTN

Meaningful · Au

The Landscape undertake to:

- **Listen deeply and learn** from Aboriginal peoples and respecting their e and waters across Sou
- **Support Aboriginal-le** delivery, particularly w ensuring partnerships
- **Respect and uphold al** promotes the rights and
- **Engage Aboriginal peo** co-design, and impleme are culturally appropriat
- **Work collaboratively** economic participation to Aboriginal peoples
- **Identify together app** boards on matters of c reflect local knowledg
- **Share and celebrate s** outcomes in land man Aboriginal peoples.



Partnership
Authentic · Together

Landscape Boards of South Australia

work together with Aboriginal peoples, recognising enduring rights, interests and connections to land in South Australia.

Use appropriate approaches to project development and where initiatives affect Aboriginal communities, these are equitable and respectful.

Follow relevant legislation that recognises, protects and promotes the interests of Aboriginal peoples.

Engage peoples meaningfully and respectfully in planning, implementation of landscape board activities, in ways that are appropriate and locally informed.

Work to create pathways for employment and income that are meaningful, sustainable and beneficial for communities.

Use appropriate ways to provide advice to landscape boards on cultural significance, ensuring these processes are transparent and governance.

Share stories of collaboration, highlighting positive outcomes achieved through partnerships with

- **Enable diverse voices to be heard**, respecting that different Nations and groups speak for themselves rather than being represented by a single perspective.
- **Commit to ongoing cultural learning and cultural safety** for board members and staff, guided and led by appropriate Aboriginal knowledge holders.
- **Develop programs and resources collaboratively** that reflect the knowledge, perspectives, and contributions of Aboriginal peoples, using inclusive language, imagery, acknowledgement and truth-telling.
- **Continuously build and strengthen relationships** grounded in trust, respect and mutual understanding.
- **Uphold the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent**, ensuring all engagement respects the rights of Aboriginal peoples, including the protection of cultural and intellectual property.

Through these commitments, each Landscape Board values the opportunity to achieve stronger relationships with Aboriginal people and organisations in South Australia, support greater economic prosperity and wellbeing for Aboriginal people and communities, and look after our Country and sea better, together.



Learn more about Landscape boards commitment to reconciliation and First Nations partnerships

Case Studies

Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

Evolving support for ranger teams

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board is in the unique position among landscape boards of working exclusively with Aboriginal communities to look after Country. The Board is working towards new ways of partnering with ranger teams as their capacity grows, maintaining a collaborative approach while recognising that their needs are changing.

- Working in partnership with Yalata Rangers on a 4G-connected Celium trap network on the Yalata coast, to protect threatened hooded plovers from feral cats and foxes
- Long-term membership of the Warru Recovery Team in the APY Lands, providing ecologist support to multiple ranger teams involved in the recovery project for the warru (black-flanked rock-wallaby)
- Support for the Oak Valley Rangers on buffel grass surveillance and control
- Partnering with Far West Coast Rangers on projects including buffel grass control, sandhill dunnart and nganamara (malleefowl) projects
- Hosting the inaugural Aboriginal Ranger Land & Sea Conference in 2026 to encourage networking, skill building and knowledge sharing among rangers across the state



Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board Ecologist with APY Warru Rangers

Aboriginal leadership

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board is the only board of its kind in Australia to be comprised entirely of Indigenous people. Board members are all Anangu with connections to Country in the region, with male and female representation from the main landholding authorities in the region – Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, Maralinga Tjarutja, Yalata and Far West Coast.

These connections assist with building relationships with landholding authorities

and ranger teams within the region, as well as providing a unique perspective on natural resource management.

Board members are well placed to make good decisions about landcare issues, based on both traditional knowledge and modern scientific approaches, informed by community priorities.

The Board's advocacy has elevated its profile at a national level, on issues including buffel grass strategy and disaster resilience for desert communities.



Fauna survey with Far West Coast Rangers

Case Studies

Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board

Healthy Country Plan workshop

In October 2025, the Eyre Peninsula (EP) Landscape Board hosted two regional workshops to engage with First Nations communities in shaping the 2026-2031 Regional Landscape Plan (RLP). These workshops were delivered in partnership with the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation (FWCAC) and the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) Landscape Board.

The sessions showcased FWCAC's Healthy Country Plan and how AW Landscape Board has successfully aligned its planning with that vision. This collaborative approach provided a powerful platform to demonstrate how the EP Landscape Board is seeking to embed Aboriginal knowledge systems and priorities into its own RLP.

Representatives from the Wirangu, Nauo and Barngarla Aboriginal Corporations were invited to participate, with a local Aboriginal community member delivering Welcome to Country at each event. The workshops fostered open dialogue, strengthened relationships, and generated valuable feedback on how the RLP can better reflect cultural values, land management aspirations and community priorities.

This initiative supports Closing the Gap Priority 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters. It also exemplifies a shift toward co-designed planning and genuine partnership with Traditional Owners.

Aboriginal Water Interest Working Group

In 2025, the Eyre Peninsula (EP) Landscape Board established the Aboriginal Water Interests Working Group (AWIWG) to ensure Aboriginal voices are embedded in the revision of the Southern Basins and Musgrave Water Allocation Plan (WAP). This initiative was co-led by the Board's Aboriginal Engagement Officer and Water Program Manager, in collaboration with South Australia Native Title representatives from the Nauo, Wirangu and Barngarla Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs), who hold Native Title over the Prescribed Wells Areas.

The AWIWG was formed to provide a culturally safe and structured platform for Aboriginal representatives to contribute to water planning. Each PBC nominates a representative to the group, who consults with their community and contributes knowledge and priorities for inclusion in the revised WAP. Participation is supported through paid engagement, recognising the value of Aboriginal expertise and time.

This partnership is a significant step toward co-design and shared decision-making in natural resource management. It ensures that Aboriginal cultural values, water rights, and aspirations are formally considered in water planning processes. All contributions are subject to prior informed consent and are incorporated into the WAP with full transparency.

The AWIWG aligns with Closing the Gap Priority 15, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights to maintain and strengthen their spiritual and cultural connection to land and water. It also reflects Priority Reform 1: formal partnerships and shared decision-making.

Prior to that in 2024, the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board consulted with Aboriginal people across the region to establish its *Caring for Country – Aboriginal Participation Plan*. The plan aims to achieve active partnerships across the landscape that enable Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people living in the region to maximise

opportunities for maintaining connection with the land and to protect and maintain culture, cultural sites and natural resources of the lands and waters of the Eyre Peninsula region.

The Board also engaged Port Lincoln Aboriginal artist Presten Warren to create an artwork that represents its work and shows the deep relationship between people and the land.



Artist Presten Warren delivers the artwork to the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board

Case Studies

Green Adelaide

Green Adelaide is committed to strengthening relationships with First Nations through our partnership with Warpulai Kumangka (meaning 'working together'), a high-level strategic advisory group that provides guidance on environmental and cultural matters. This collaboration is an innovative model for cultural engagement in the environmental sector, fostering shared visions for the future while building community capacity and raising awareness of Kurna cultural knowledge and values. Through this partnership, Green Adelaide is working to embed Kurna cultural practices and land management approaches into environmental projects and activities across Kurna Yarta.

Green Adelaide supports the Kurna Kardla (Fire) Program at Kauwi-marnirla—Field River Conservation Park, enabling Kurna-led cultural burning that supports both conservation outcomes and the continuation of cultural knowledge on Country. Restoration efforts include the return of Kurna cultural practices to Country. This includes cultural fire, practices used by First Nations people, to enhance the health of Yarta (Country) and its Miyurna (People). As part of the Field River Restoration project, Green Adelaide is proud to support

the 'Reigniting Kurna Cultural Practices' program, which plans, delivers and monitors a series of burns within the Field River area.

Additionally, the incorporation of cultural knowledge and storytelling at Breakout Creek / Purruna Pari in Adelaide's west saw 9 Kurna sculptures featured, from Kurna artist Allan Sumner and his team. This included the pouched lamprey, or ngudlitidli nuinpi in the Kurna language, a remarkable and historically significant species, both ecologically and culturally. At the coastal end of the space, and leading down to the Kurna reflection space, stands the Kurna Kuntuli Wardli Bone Shelter. This sculpture is a powerful representation of the deep connection between the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri peoples and their coastal environment.



*Ngudlitidli Nuinpi Sculpture
(Lamprey Sculpture). Image:
Sam Oster*



*Kurna Kuntuli Wardli Bone
Shelter. Image: Sam Oster*

Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board

First Nations engagement

The recent First Nations art procurement project run by Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu (LHF) was strengthened by the involvement of Aboriginal community members who guided the process with cultural knowledge and care. A key part of this was the assessment panel, which included an LHF staff member, a board member, an independent Aboriginal art expert, and representatives from Peramangk, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri communities. Their experience and perspectives helped ensure the project was respectful and culturally appropriate.

Throughout the process, the panel provided advice on how to handle cultural information, how to support artists, and how to keep the assessment fair. They shared insights into artists' cultural responsibilities, creative approaches and personal aspirations. Many of the submissions reflected themes of healing, caring for Country and cultural continuity, which align closely with the Board's values and approach to land management.

The panel unanimously selected Ngarrindjeri artist Jamaya Branson. During her interview, Jamaya spoke with sincerity and respect for culture, Elders and community. She highlighted the strong connection between people, land and water, which resonated with the Board's vision. Her artwork shows promise as a tool for cultural learning, and this opportunity will support her continued growth as an artist.



Overall, the project became more than a procurement activity. It helped build stronger relationships between the Board and First Nations communities, supported Aboriginal artists, and reinforced the importance of culturally-informed decision making.

In doing so, the project contributes to broader Closing the Gap efforts by supporting First Nations leadership in decision making, recognising the role of community-controlled organisations, strengthening cultural identity, creating opportunities for an emerging Aboriginal artist, and modelling respectful and culturally grounded practice.

A message from the artist, Jamaya Branson:

In this painting I wanted to capture what represents the 5 priorities of the Landscape Board – land, water, nature, climate, and community.

At the centre of the artwork is a meeting place that holds the community together with outward line work that sections off the art for the other "Priorities". The same colour of the people is used in the sections between each element that represents the community working on country.

The bottom left holds the Nature, using the eucalyptus leaves over light and darker brown dots that show different shades of the trees which they grow on.

The bottom right holds the Birds Eye view of the land, with various colours of the landscape and meeting places within our community.

The top left holds our many water ways, rivers, lakes, creeks, oceans & streams. Some way all connected throughout our Ruwe (country/land). A vital life source for our peoples and animals.

The top right holds what represents Climate. The sun, rainfall, storms and clouds. The sun is also another important component in our culture. It helps us and our land thrive and grow.

Each brush stroke and line work holds an important meaning and brings together all 5 priorities.

Anu Nginti (Thank You)
Jamaya Branson

Jamaya presenting her artwork

Case Studies

Yarluwar Ruwe Ranger Program The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board has a long and enduring relationship with the Ngarrindjeri Nation, whose traditional lands encompass much of the eastern Fleurieu and beyond, including Lake Alexandrina and the Murray Mouth/Coorong system.

In 2023, senior staff from Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu attended and supported the first South Australian Aboriginal Land and Sea Management forum in Hahndorf, hosted by Canberra-based Indigenous ranger advocacy NGO, Country Needs People. During the three-day forum, Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu staff learned about funding opportunities which could enable the Ngarrindjeri community to establish an Indigenous Ranger Program in the Hills and Fleurieu region. The event also showcased the unique and valuable impacts of existing ranger programs across South Australia at local and regional scales.

Inspired by this, the Board shifted its approach. Rather than engaging Indigenous land managers

and communities through short-term, project-based contracts, it committed to supporting the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation to build in-house capacity and develop its own Indigenous Ranger Program (IRP).

With modest funding for a specialist consultant and technical support from Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu, the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation co-designed a successful IRP application and secured more than \$4 million over three years. Now approaching its first 12 months of operations, the 'Yarluwar Ruwe Ranger Program' employs more than 30 Ngarrindjeri rangers working across more than a dozen projects, several of which are funded in partnership with the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board.

This case is a strong example of communities coming together and mobilising quickly to seize a federal funding opportunity, with First Nations leadership at the forefront of Closing the Gap.



Kangaroo Island Landscape Board

Country Plan for Kangaroo Island

The Kangaroo Island Landscape Board (KILB) has received funding to work with the Ngarrindjeri, Kurna and Narungga Nation groups to undertake a Country Planning process for Kangaroo Island.

The KILB has committed to an approach that ensures that this project is Aboriginal led and represents the interests of the three Nations in relation to Kangaroo Island. This includes flexibility around priority activities, methodologies and agreed outcomes that the project will aim to achieve.

It is hoped this Country planning process will provide the opportunity to:

- Strengthen partnerships between the Nation groups and build on previous and current collaborations.
- Establish a shared vision for Kangaroo Island that clearly encompasses Aboriginal cultural and social values.

The first KI Country Planning Gathering was held on Kangaroo Island in September 2025. The three respective Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) - the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC), Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation (NNAC) and Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC) - nominated 12 people each to attend the Gathering which included field trips and workshops. On the final day of the Gathering, a ceremony was held and representatives from the three PBCs signed a 'Statement of Commitment' to develop a comprehensive country plan that honours their histories, cultures and future together. Following the Gathering it is proposed that a working group is formed consisting of four representatives from each Nation to progress discussions identified during the Gathering workshop sessions. The KILB will incorporate the outcomes and priorities of the Kangaroo Island Country Planning process into their strategic planning.



Integrating culture and technology for a future free of feral cats

Through its Dudley Peninsula feral cat eradication program, the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board (KILB) is partnering with Tracks in the Sand to share traditional knowledge and cutting-edge technology that deliver more impactful pest animal control programs across South Australia.

Mr Boland, a Nukunu Narungga man and sole owner of Tracks in the Sand said, “This program is about learning from both sides of culture – both indigenous and non-indigenous.”

Mr Boland said the program is about first building a relationship and a long-term partnership between the KILB, Tracks in the Sands, Nukunu, Narungga and other young Aboriginal people in South Australia and ranger groups in South Australia.

“From this, we can find ways to share and learn about culture and technology, and how to use tools and technology to help care for Country together in a culturally safe way,” he said.

In May this year, Mr Boland brought four young Nukunu Narungga people to Kangaroo Island to learn alongside the KILB Dudley Peninsula feral cat eradication team out in the field. In August, members of the KILB team travelled to the Southern Flinders Ranges to set up pest animal technology on Nukunu country for

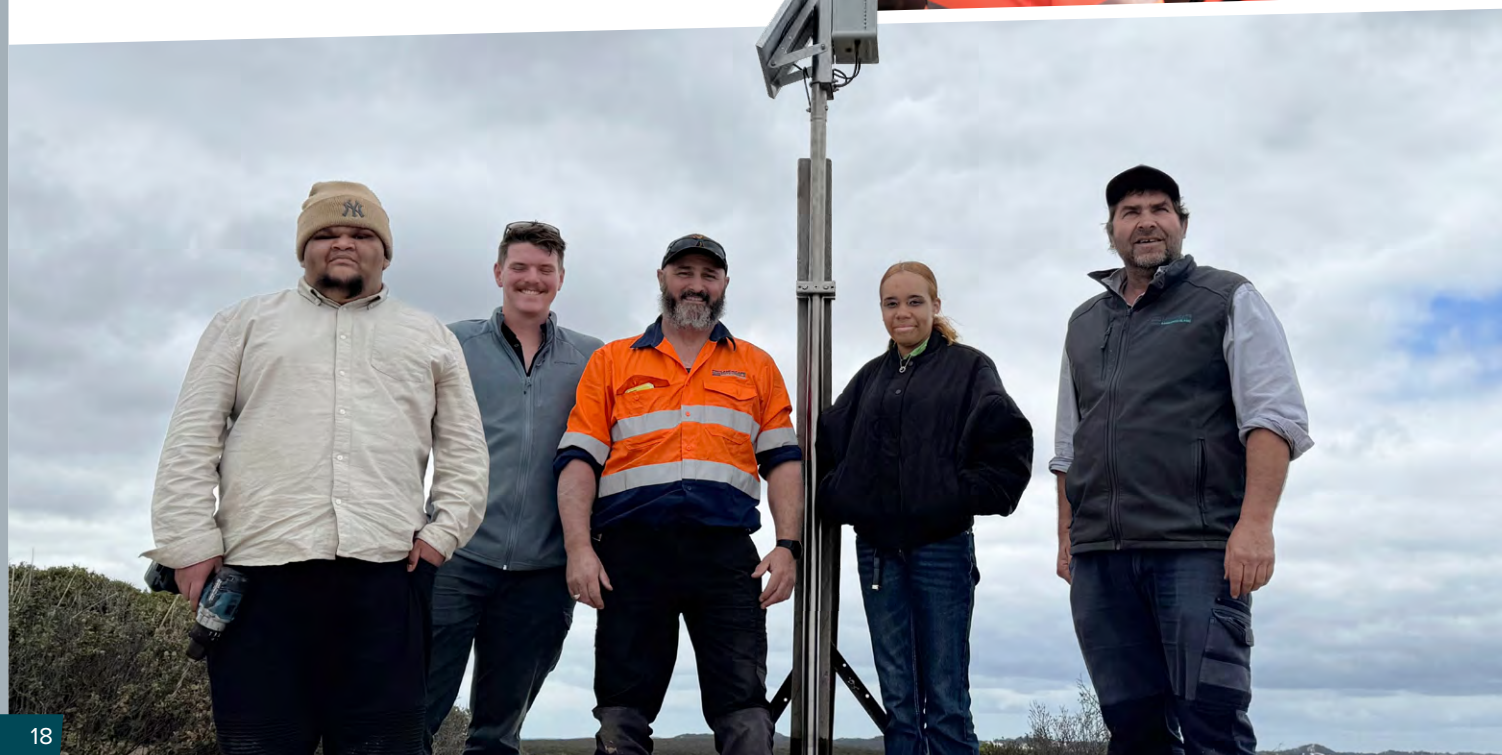
the first time. Another knowledge exchange occurred in October when 12 Nukunu Narungga people travelled to Kangaroo Island to learn how to set up a feral cat monitoring and control program to help protect Australian sea lions from diseases feral cats spread.

“We are keen and passionate about seeing this pilot program grow into something bigger that can connect our young people to Country and culture,” said Mr Boland.

“This program is about giving young Aboriginal people the training and understanding they need to help them get jobs and know what the job is about on their own Country.

“We want young people growing up in a working man’s culture.

“Because when you talk culture, it means respect. It’s about the people, animals, land, water, wind, sky and seasons; it must come from the heart.”



Limestone Coast Landscape Board

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board (formerly the South East Natural Resources Management Board), South East Aboriginal Focus Group and Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation have worked together over many decades in the Limestone Coast. The partnership collaborates on projects and guides engagement and inclusion in environmental planning and on-ground works.

Land management activities are governed by the Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance framework guiding partnerships and embedding cultural knowledge in on-ground land management actions.

The Limestone Coast Walking Together Statement describes the way in which the partners work together to manage the landscape.

Karst springs restoration

Amongst the extensively drained, cleared and fragmented habitat and farmland of the Naracoorte Coastal Plain Bioregion, an endangered karst springs and associated alkaline fens habitat lies on the coast at Eight Mile Creek near Port MacDonnell.

The area is only one of a small number found in South Australia and Victoria, contributing to 912 hectares of karst springs and alkaline fens nationally.

In 2022, the Limestone Coast Landscape board purchased a ninety-hectare property that contains three karst springs with the intent of re-inundating the property to restore farmland to wetland.

The project vision is to “work together to enhance and restore the ecological and cultural values of the karst springs and alkaline fen for the benefit of biodiversity and the local community.”

Project partners, Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation, South East Aboriginal Focus Group and the South Eastern Water Conservation and Drainage Board, along with the Limestone Coast Landscape Board, have identified the cultural values and benefits to First Nations peoples as key objectives of the project.

Participation of Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation at all levels of the project has been critical to the project’s establishment and success so far, and will continue beyond the completion of the initial restoration in 2028. To date, this has involved:

- Membership on the project Steering Committee
- Facilitating engagement of the Boandik Working Group who act to provide advice and feedback through all aspects of the project’s progress
- Development of the site’s Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Undertaking Cultural Heritage monitoring during investigative works
- Direct on ground works site preparation and management works through the Burrandies labour hire team



Case Studies

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Aboriginal partnerships in the Murraylands and Riverland

Partnering with Aboriginal communities is a key priority of the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board. Through genuine, respectful collaboration with Aboriginal groups and communities, the Board supports a range of initiatives that increase the participation of Aboriginal people and improve the management of Country.

Key partnership activities include:

- Ongoing engagement through regular meetings, workshops and on-Country tours to build strong relationships and ensure early, meaningful engagement.
- Collaborative planning processes including regional landscape planning, water allocation planning and environmental water planning.
- Funding to First Nations organisations to employ community-based staff and support culturally appropriate engagement.

- Supporting Aboriginal ranger teams to lead on-ground land and water management.
- Protecting cultural heritage during on-ground activities.
- Providing technical support and resources to Aboriginal groups and landholders to manage Country.
- Empowering Aboriginal youth through supporting Aboriginal schools, the SAASTA program and Junior Ranger initiatives.
- Joint conservation efforts, including threatened species recovery, wetland restoration, and pest control.

Building the cultural competency of the landscape board and its staff and partners through First Nations-delivered training and relationship building.

These efforts are contributing to the health of Country and to a range of Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and Outcomes in the Murraylands and Riverland.



River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation Rangers undertaking fencing training with the TAFE Aboriginal Access Centre at Gerard.

Yarning about Climate Change

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board has partnered with the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC), the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) and the SA Drought Hub to deliver a series of community climate change yarning circles.

The yarning circles brought together climate scientists and Aboriginal community members to discuss climate change, examine local climate projections, explore potential impacts on cultural values and their communities, and identify opportunities to take action. The knowledge and understanding generated by these discussions led to significant outcomes for the groups involved.

The priorities identified by the Ngarrindjeri community at the NAC yarning circles have since been progressed through a large collaborative, Ngarrindjeri-led landscape management project. These included establishing a monitoring program for freshwater soaks along the Coorong,

getting involved in key threatened and culturally significant species conservation programs, and undertaking a major revegetation project at a significant site on Lake Alexandrina.

RMMAC incorporated the priorities identified during their yarning circles into a successful funding proposal, which has expanded their ranger program to care for Country across the Riverland and Mallee. This work will include monitoring and managing the health of scar trees along the River Murray, which were identified during the yarning circles as being at significant risk due to climate change.

The project is an example of an effective and culturally appropriate approach for engaging Aboriginal communities in climate change discussions and planning, and how this can lead to direct on-ground action. It also contributes to several Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and Outcomes.



Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation Climate Change Yarning Circle at Meningie.

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board

Advancing Closing the Gap Priority Reforms through the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board Five Nations Landscape Committee

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board (NYLB) Five Nations Landscape Committee provides a practical example of how multiple Closing the Gap Priority Reforms can be implemented at a regional scale. Representing the Narungga, Nukunu, Ngadjuri, Peramangk and Kaurna Nations, the Committee embeds First Nations leadership into landscape governance and decision-making across the region.

In line with Priority Reform One – Formal Partnership and Shared Decision-Making, the Committee is formally integrated into NYLB governance structures, enabling Aboriginal representatives to influence strategic planning, investment priorities and program design. This moves engagement beyond consultation and ensures decisions affecting Country are shaped by those with enduring cultural authority and connection.

The Committee also supports Priority Reform Two – Building the Community-Controlled Sector

by strengthening relationships with Aboriginal organisations and encouraging Aboriginal-led delivery where appropriate. Through its advice, the Committee helps identify opportunities for partnerships, cultural land management, employment and enterprise that support the growth of community-controlled activities within the environmental and land management sectors.

Importantly, the Five Nations Landscape Committee contributes to Priority Reform Three – Transforming Government Organisations. Its ongoing role challenges and reshapes how NYLB works, embedding cultural protocols, accountability and culturally informed decision-making into everyday operations. This has improved organisational capability, staff awareness and governance practices across the Board.

By integrating shared decision-making, supporting Aboriginal-led pathways and transforming internal systems, the Five Nations Landscape Committee demonstrates a mature, place-based approach to Closing the Gap. It shows how regional landscape governance can deliver lasting cultural, environmental and social outcomes while caring for Country together.



Northern and Yorke's Five Nations Landscape Committee.

SA Arid Lands Landscape Board

An exemplar partnership: SA Arid Lands and First Nations, working together on Country

More than half of South Australia — 52 per cent of the state — falls within the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board region. It is Country shared by 18 First Nations groups, a growing network of Indigenous Ranger teams, and a number of Indigenous Protected Areas.

In 2022, the Board set out to turn that shared connection into shared action. Partnering with First Nations groups it formed the Aboriginal Engagement Network (AEN), a network built to genuinely link the Board's work with the aspirations of First Nations people caring for Country.

What makes the AEN different is its flexibility. With no fixed membership list dictating who shows up, different people from different ranger teams and groups attend when they can, sharing knowledge and learning from each other along the way. Elders bring young people who are curious to see what it's all about. The network wrote its own terms of reference and the AEN holds the board accountable to the aims of the Landscape Boards' Statement of Commitment.

Through the AEN, the Board has been able to seek clarity, provide updates, and open doors to other agencies working in the region, among them Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA).

The results are numerous: funding secured to get families out on Country, grants awarded to support Healthy Country Plans, engagement on Board plans, and — the flagship achievement

— an Indigenous Ranger Gathering now in its fourth year and hosted in partnership with IDA.

From an idea to an institution

A conversation at an AEN meeting in July 2022 led to an idea: what if the region's Indigenous Ranger teams got together to share knowledge and training?

A year later, that idea became reality. The inaugural SA Arid Lands Ranger Gathering was held on Kokatha Country in 2023, built on a strong partnership between SAAL, the Indigenous Desert Alliance, and Kokatha Pastoral — with backing from the National Indigenous Australian Agency, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and BHP.

The Gathering is now an annual fixture on the calendar:

- 2024 — Nukunu Country, partnering with IDA and Nukunu Wapma Thura
- 2025 — Arabana Country, partnering with IDA, Arabana Aboriginal Corporation and Arabana Rangers, and supported by BHP.
- 2026 — Arkaroola, on Adnyamathanha Country, partnering with IDA, the Nantawarrina Rangers and the Ranger coordinating committee — the biggest Gathering yet, with 9 ranger groups in attendance

But the numbers only tell part of the story. The real win is what's happening between Gatherings — ranger teams across the region now regularly coordinate training, resources and knowledge, and lend each other a hand whenever they can.



Contact Information

For more information on the work of South Australia's landscape boards in Closing the Gap, please contact:

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