

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Performance Report

Quarter 1 | July - September 2022

Outcomes aligned with the 2022-23 annual business plan investment and priorities



From the General Manager

I am pleased to present the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Performance Report for the first quarter of 2022/2023.

This report summarises the performance and activities over the past 3 months and tracks our progress towards delivering the investment and priorities as outlined in the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Annual Business Plan.

It provides the regular review of programs, services and projects and also highlights achievements, key partnerships and other related matters that have occurred during the period.

This report is one of the organisation's key reporting tools used to deliver performance related information to landscape board members, the organisation and the wider community.

I hope that you will find its content valuable and informative.



Andrew Meddle
General Manager













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*note that budget may be different to that of the Business Plan, due to additional income being received or carry-over of funds from prior year.

1. Executive Summary

In quarter 1 of 2022-23, the following progress has been made and program delivery is predominantly **on track** for the financial year.

Strategic Priority	Annual Business Plan Programs	Program Strategies
 Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable agriculture Farm soils and vegetation management Regional Landcare facilitator Soil extension activities Pest plant and animal management 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (8) Not started (1)
 Sustainable water use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable irrigation Water planning and management Water allocation planning Water literacy Pest plant and animal Management 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (14) Not started (2) Behind schedule (2)
 Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetlands and floodplain restoration Restoring RAMSAR wetlands Pest plant and animal management 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (3)
 Healthy landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape scale restoration Restoring Iron Grass grasslands Threatened Mallee birds Pest plant and animal management 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (18) Not started (3) Behind schedule (2)
 People at the heart of landscape management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassroots grants Education program Aboriginal partnership program Capacity building and volunteer Support Citizens' science 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (20) Behind schedule (1)
 Foundational programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board leadership and governance Planning and evaluation Customer and business services Communications Council levy collection fees 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track (27) Not started (1) Behind schedule (1)

Highlights Summary

A summary of the key highlights from across the regional priorities:

- Spring is always a highlight for the sustainable agriculture team. This quarter, 269 land managers attended field days, seminars and workshops.
- The final report for the Low Rainfall Zone Regenerative Opportunities project funded through Future Drought Fund Resilient Landscapes has been submitted.
- The River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) hosted the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) for the third time in a series of groundwater training sessions to support First Nations' engagement in the Mallee water allocation planning process.
- Partnership opportunities continue to be actively pursued with a new project commencing with CERES Imaging linking with a cross Drought Hub Horticulture project.
- The landscape board continues to be actively engaged with the One Basin CRC through 'Quick Start' projects and the 'Challenge process' which assists to identify early investment opportunities.
- The Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland (INTG) team delivered 2 field days at the end of September, to promote the grassland management trials at Terowie, Hallett and Truro.
- A variety of native orchid species have been found during surveys at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park; they include leek, onion, greenhoods and donkey orchids.
- Five new orchid populations of coloured spider-orchid, (*Caledenia colorata*) listed as Endangered, were reported around Tailem Bend, Sherlock and Rockleigh. These will be prioritised for ground-truthing next season as part of the Threatened Flora Program.
- Through the Improving habitat viability and other recovery actions for EPBC listed Mallee woodland birds, a colony of black-eared miner was targeted for investigation at Gluepot Reserve. Genetic samples were collected from 8 birds.
- Experts from the Australian National University visited the Riverland and spent time with the Regent Parrot Recovery Team installing nest cameras and sharing their methodology on measuring nesting success.
- The education team finalised the River Murray turtle education resources to help educate schools and the community about local native turtle species.
- Thirty teachers from the Murraylands and Riverland participated in the teacher professional development sessions on the landscape board's priority 'Healthy Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands'.
- The First Nations partnerships team and the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation's ranger team attended the Riverland Field Days to promote the programs and give community members the opportunity to find out more about First Nations' engagement.
- The RMMAC ranger team participated in a training session with landscape board staff about the use of drones.
- The First Nations partnerships team has supported the One Basin CRC and the SA Drought Hub with their First Nations engagement.
- Awards were presented to individuals and groups for Outstanding Achievement in Citizen Science at National Science Week events held at Tailem Bend and Loxton.
- A state-wide knowledge sharing sojourn commenced with a classroom workshop at Loxton North Primary School to share with students some of the findings from their efforts in the Insect Investigators project.

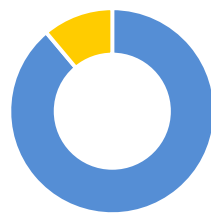
- An informal workshop was held at Tailem Bend between neighbouring landholders to help identify bridal veil, and share information regarding the associated risks and best practise control methods.
- A workshop for the Healthy Rivers project was delivered at Big Bend by Night at Devon Downs with 23 people attending the day.
- Works have continued at Ponde with spraying of African boxthorn infestations across 5 properties for the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project.
- 4,000 boneseed plants were treated during 30 hours of contractor spraying effort on Crown land and adjacent to the river in Morgan.
- The Riverland Field Days were a great success with many attendees visiting our marquee.
- Traditional media has been particularly successful over the past quarter with strong interest from the media and interviews requested for almost all media releases.
- Two spatial apps to improve data collection have been delivered by the Investment and Information team, for use in the South Olary Plains Bird Survey and the Black Eared Miner Bird Surveys.
- Key business outputs were delivered including the 2021-22 Annual Evaluation process, the production of the Annual Evaluation Summary for the board and Executive Leadership Team, and the Annual Highlights report for the community.
- Ten vacancies across the organisation were advertised resulting in 5 recruitments.
- A new performance and development review template was developed and rolled out across the organisation.

2. Performance by Strategic Priority

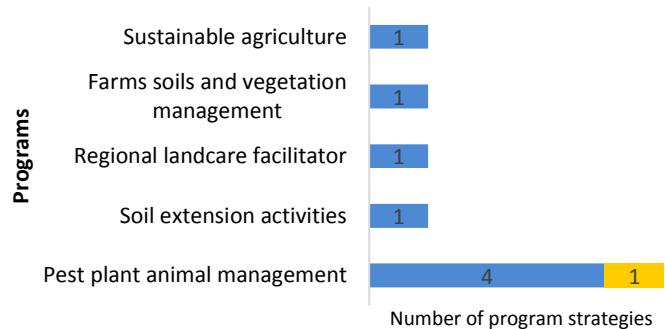


Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

Status of program strategies



■ On track (8)
■ Not started (1)



Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

The Regional Landscape Plan provides the direction for our work by defining priorities and relevant focus areas for delivery. The table provided below indicates how program delivery is aligned and contributes to the focus areas under each landscape plan priority.

Program Focus Areas	Sustainable agriculture	Farms soils and vegetation management	Regional agriculture Landcare facilitator	Soils extension activities	Pest plant animal management
SA 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SA 2					✓
SA 3		✓			
SA 4		✓			
SA 5				✓	
PP 3			✓		
PP 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	
PP 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	

*Refer to Appendix 1

Program Progress Summary

This quarter has been a busy time for staff working on the landscape board's sustainable agriculture projects with many events held and supported by the organisation. The team has had significant success engaging landholders keen to learn about new advances in agriculture and the results of work that has been undertaken by the landscape board and others in the region.

Emerging pest issues have been dealt with promptly and best practice information has been shared with landholders to raise awareness and encourage action. Responses from the community continue to be positive and staff skills are highly regarded. One pest control project has not yet commenced as it is scheduled to do so later in the year.

Program quarterly highlights

- Barrie Williams, our Soil Extension Officer, has hit the ground running, engaging with landholders, establishing networks and has trial planning well underway. Barrie has also participated in a nationally accredited soil extension course.
- The team generated some great enthusiasm at the Riverland Field Days - the weather was a little crazy, but it didn't deter attendance and connection with the community. Denham Ewens did a fantastic job putting together the land and water management team display and the soiled undies on display certainly created a lot of interest.
- Spring is always a highlight for the sustainable agriculture team and with some much needed September rain we have seen great number at events around the region. Almost 270 Land managers attended field days, seminars and workshops, covering topics including regenerative agriculture, livestock management and efficiency, local trial results and managing production on sands.



Photo 1. GWLAP Regenerative Agriculture Conference.



Photo 2. Murray Plains Farmers always draw a great crowd, at the SARDI time of sowing trial at the September crop walk.



Photo 3. Always a great day out with Lowbank Ag Bureau, at a new Open Pollinated Canola variety trial.

- The Future Drought Fund's Resilient Landscapes, Low Rainfall Zone Regenerative Opportunities project final report has been submitted. In collaboration with Mallee Sustainable Farming, Birchip Cropping Group and the CSIRO, the project investigated what regenerative agriculture means for the low rainfall zone and established which current production practices meet regenerative agriculture ideologies.



Photo 4. Mallee Sustainable Farming's driving field day; green manuring options at Bowhill

- The first SA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting was held for the low rainfall Loxton node. At the meeting, community, agriculture-focused organisations, industry and farming groups came together to work towards collaborations that will most benefit regional drought resilience.

There have been reports of wild dogs in the Carcuma area over the last month. Following communications with a landholder, it was discovered that there were 2 packs of 3 dogs. One pack had not been seen since originally reported. The second pack was seen with one dog destroyed via gun shot, the two remaining dogs have not been seen again.

District staff have been communicating with Limestone Coast Landscape Board staff and National Parks and Wildlife Services to approach these reports in a collaborative manner. The western boundary of Ngarkat Conservation Park will be baited in a more intensive effort in case the dogs are moving towards the park.



Photo 5. Wild dogs near Carcuma blending in with their surrounds while they stalk a kangaroo.

- Bridal veil was identified during a routine property inspection on private property on Blackett Road, Tailm Bend while District staff were looking for boxthorns. An informal workshop was held between neighbouring landholders to help identify bridal veil, share information regarding the risks it poses and discuss best practise control methods. District staff are currently patrolling nearby properties to help identify any additional plants, however to date the infestation appears to be isolated to one property and control works have already been undertaken.
- Reports were received from the Murray Bridge Caravan Park of a fox that was causing issues with campers. District staff responded immediately and provided a trap and advice to the owners of the caravan park and the fox was caught on the same night.



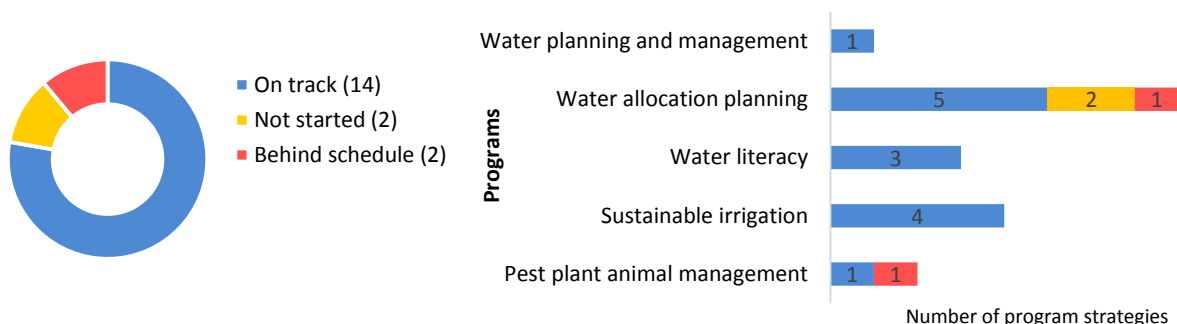
Photo 6. District staff assisted in the trapping of a fox at the Murray Bridge Caravan Park.

- The identification of 2 large infestations of opuntoid species (Indian figs on cliffs overlooking the river in Loxton North and devil's rope on private land in Barmera) led to the district team sourcing and distributing relevant cochineal. At the annual weeds conference, staff from the Arid Lands region also alerted us to a new lineage of the cochineal used to control *Opuntia stricta*. Cochineal resistance has been an issue in this species in our region, and it was exciting to hear that a group with alternative lineage exists which may provide better success.



Sustainable water use

Status of program strategies



Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

The Regional Landscape Plan provides the direction for our work by defining the priorities and relevant focus areas for delivery. The table provided below indicates how program delivery is aligned and contributes to the focus areas under each landscape plan priority.

Program Focus Areas	Water planning and management	Water allocation planning	Water literacy	Sustainable irrigation	Pest plant animal management
SW 1				✓	
SW 2	✓	✓		✓	
SW 3		✓	✓		
SW 4		✓			
SW 5					✓
PP 2		✓			
RW 2		✓			

*Refer to Appendix 1

Program Progress Summary

Delivery of programs under the sustainable water use priority has been steady for the first quarter of 2022-23. There are a couple of projects that are a little behind due to delays in staff recruitment and the current high flows in the River Murray which have limited district staff access for pest plant control along the river corridor. The landscape board's water resources team has delivered training and knowledge sharing with First Nations in the Mallee around groundwater systems and has supported the landscape board and its advisory committees with the current focus being around the predicted high flows and over banks flows. Implementation of the Water Efficiency Program by the Land and Water management team continues to progress with 22 of 28 contracted projects having now completed on-farm works.

Program quarterly highlights

- In 2021, First Nations were engaged to provide input into the 10 year reviews of the Peake Roby Sherlock, and Mallee Water Allocation Plans (WAPs). During the engagement process, RMMAC and NAC both identified a gap in First Nation's knowledge about groundwater processes and management. Both organisations suggested that targeted training for First Nation's people to better understand hydrogeological processes would enable successful input into the review and amendment of the WAPs.



Photo 7 & 8. The third groundwater training workshop with First Nations about water policy, planning and management. NAC and RMMAC community talking and learning about groundwater processes in the Mallee Butchers Soak, Mallee Prescribed Wells

The workshop/field visit to Butchers Soak in the Mallee was the third event in the series, with the previous workshops being held at the Drill Core Library at Tonsley in June 2021, and a second workshop at Murray Bridge / Swanport Bridge Reserve in September 2021. It was an enjoyable day with 25 First Nations participants travelling to the Mallee learning about the groundwater processes for perched aquifers systems like Butchers Soak.



Photo 9. Enys Watt, hydrogeologist from DEW talking to NAC and RMMAC community about groundwater processes in the Mallee Butchers Soak, Mallee Prescribed Wells Area.

The group was also able to visit a Mallee fowl mound and hear about this amazing and elusive bird while being warned away by the local resident peregrine falcon nesting nearby. Having a field trip with both First Nations groups allowed for further information sharing between groups, relationships further developed and invitations were extended for people to visit Country and hear

their stories. Both groups really enjoyed the opportunity of having sessions together and would like more of these in the future.

- Implementation of the Water Efficiency Program continues to progress well with 22 of 28 contracted projects having now completed on-farm works.



Photo 10. New netting infrastructure installed through the Water Efficiency Program (WEP).

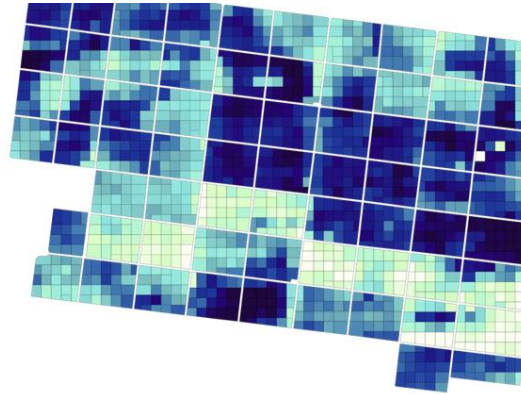


Photo 11. The Board is working on a new project with CERES Imaging to generate water demand maps which will link to local weather station data.

- Partnership opportunities continue to be actively pursued with a new project having commenced with CERES Imaging that links with a cross Drought Hub Horticulture project.
- The landscape board continues to be actively engaged with the One Basin CRC through the Quick Start projects and the Challenge process which assists to identify early investment opportunities.

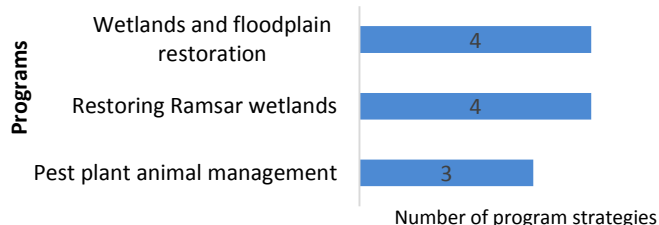


Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

Status of program strategies



■ On track (11)



Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

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Program Focus Areas	Wetland and floodplain restoration	Restoring Ramsar wetlands	Pest plant animal management
RW 1	✓	✓	
RW 2			
RW 3	✓	✓	
RW 4	✓	✓	
RW 5			✓
PP 4		✓	

**Refer to Appendix 1*

Program Progress Summary

Increasing flows in the river channel, backwaters and wetlands has started to impact teams undertaking works in these areas. To date, this has both required adaptation by staff and created opportunity with partners. This period has seen strong engagement with community and the work we do. Despite the challenges of high flows, the aquatic projects have continued unimpeded with some work schedules changed to accommodate the changing conditions.

Program quarterly highlights

- The current/forecast high flows/broad-scale flooding events has necessitated a complete reconfiguration of all pool-connected and pump-site wetland management. All sites have been reconfigured to manage prolonged, high flow conditions. Landscape board operations are currently 'hands free' until flows recede significantly.



Photo 12. High flows to the Lower Lakes.



Photo 13. Wetland operations go 'hands free' as structures go under water.

- Over the last 3-4 years, Aquasave - Nature Glenelg Trust in collaboration with the wetlands team has been trying to set the stage for a reintroduction of the nationally endangered Murray crayfish (*Euastacas armatus*) back in to South Australia. There have been ongoing discussions with colleagues in NSW (linked through Tri-State Alliance and other networks) and we have had an in-principle agreement that, at the right time, there would be collaboration to initiate a significant-scale trial translocation into the SA River Murray. As a consequence of the current very high flows/flooding in the upper Murray, a number of substantial black-water events are unfolding. Fisheries NSW are in the process of conducting a population rescue and arrangements have been made for a large number of crays to be moved to SA for holding. This will open the door for discussions about a reintroduction initiative in SA.



Photo 84. Wetlands team break out the kayaks to install remote monitoring equipment as water levels rise.

- **Weed Warriors of our Waterways**

Works have continued at Ponde with spraying of African boxthorn infestations across five properties for the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project. Treatment of buffer zones on some properties has been deployed due to the significant size of the infestations. This will be a control zone and also an education tool for landowners in the area to show that the plant can be controlled with foliar spraying. Results are speaking for themselves as landowners are asking to participate in the program and undertake in their own control works and this is being facilitated through the loan of our trailer spray unit to enable further works on their properties. Spraying of Crown Land and levee banks adjacent to the river in this area - which has historically been a difficult location for landholders to access - is now almost completed. Boneseed was controlled as part of this work with a few scattered *Opuntia* plants to be treated over the coming months.

In another area, more than 4000 boneseed plants were treated during 30 hours of contractor spraying effort on Crown Land adjacent to the river in Morgan. Spraying was conducted by district staff to treat 50 fountain grass plants on riparian zones in Gurra. Additional areas treated for boxthorn and boneseed include the stretch from Loch Luna to Lock 3 and also near Gerard. Discussions are being held with landholders around the Beldora/Spectacle Lakes area to plan a collaborative program of treatment, also including such species as golden dodder and its host noogoora burr, as part of the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project.

- **Healthy Rivers Project**

A workshop was delivered on 23 September at 'Big Bend by Night' at Devon Downs with 23 people attending the day to learn about best practice control methods. This included biological control, control tools and how to use them, demonstrations on spraying, stem injection and equipment that the landscape board could provide on loan as part of the Healthy Rivers project.



Photo 95. Weed identification and control method demonstration at Devon Downs.

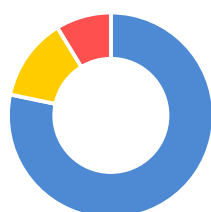
The workshop resulted in a number of landowners borrowing equipment to start control efforts on their own properties. After seeing a sample, a landowner confirmed that he had an infestation of hudson pear on his property. This will be a priority weed to survey and see how best it can be removed to stop any spread.

Overall, the field day was a success with some key contacts made in the area which will hopefully create opportunities with adjoining landowners.

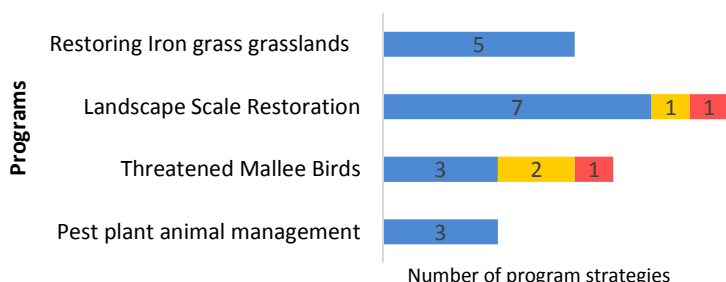


Healthy natural landscapes

Status of program strategies



■ On track (18)
■ Not started (3)
■ Behind schedule (2)



Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

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Program Focus Areas	Restoring Iron grass grasslands	Landscape Scale Restoration	Threatened Mallee Birds	Pest plant animal management
HL 1		✓	✓	
HL 2			✓	
HL 3	✓	✓		
HL 4	✓	✓		
HL 5		✓	✓	
HL 6				✓
SA 3	✓			
PP 1		✓	✓	
PP 4	✓	✓		
FP 4		✓		

*Refer to Appendix 1

Progress Summary

The landscape ecology team has made some exciting project advances this quarter with species detected, behaviours observed and knowledge gained. The environmental conditions have posed some challenges but teams have adapted and adjusted their work schedules to maintain momentum where possible. Some work shown as not started is scheduled to start later in the year.

Pest control has achieved some positive outcomes with boxthorn and feral pig control being targeted. This work will be supported with the addition of a new staff member.

Program quarterly highlights

- **Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland (INTG) Field days**

Two field days were conducted at the end of September to promote the grassland management trials at Terowie, Hallett and Truro. As a result of feedback from previous field days, morning grassland pasture walks were included to informally discuss the variety of grassland plants, their function and role in grazing systems.



Photo 16 & 17. Participants at Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland (INTG) field days.

The days were popular and there is interest from attendees to come and have another look at these sites, with further field days planned for March 2023.

A number of new land managers attended the field days and there was keen interest in the seeding trials.

The field days were delivered with our INTG Working Group – Nicola Barnes, Andrew Fairney (Seeding Natives), Anne Brown and Aimee Linke (Mid Murray Landcare SA).



Photo 108. Left to right: Nicola Barnes, Andrew Fairney, Anne Brown and Aimee Linke.

- **Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland**

The grassland management trial at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park is going strong, with grazing and slashing treatments completed in September 2022. Ngarrindjeri community members Vera and Owen provided valued assistance in moving sheep through 10 trial plots over a 2 week period. In addition, Seeding Natives has undertaken the slashing work and the spring vegetation monitoring has been completed. This trial has been going for 6 years now and the data is about to be analysed as part of the final year of the National Landcare Program project aimed to restore this threatened ecological community.

- **Poonthie Ruwe spring madness and trial 5 years on**

Landscape board ecologists Kate Graham and Nicola Barnes have been visiting the wonderful grasslands at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park every month this year. Spring is usually the best time of year to undertake vegetation monitoring, but there is more going on in winter than first thought. The first surprise has been the abundance of native orchids at the park. Whilst it was known there were leek and onion orchids in the park - along with a few scattered greenhoods - the discovery of hundreds of donkey orchids was unexpected.

Another surprise was the sight of a field of yam daisies flowering. There have certainly been some changes following the last couple of years with La Nina conditions. The tiny microflora are thriving – best appreciated whilst kneeling down!



Photo 119. Yam daisies flowering in mass at Poonthie Ruwe Conservation Park

- **Worlds End Conservation – Read Creek Hills**

Another training day for members of the Worlds End Conservation Company was run this quarter. Volunteers have been monitoring trials that exclude rabbit and kangaroo grazing and were set up in collaboration with the Native Grassland Project. The volunteers were quick to pick up the method and were undaunted by the rain.

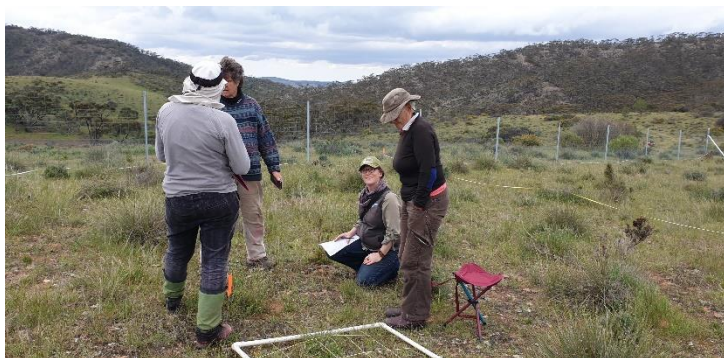


Photo 20. Nicola Branes training members of the Worlds End Conservation Company.

Everyone was excited to see the nest of an Australasian pipit which was found inside the trial's fenced area. This species nests on the ground and this nest was cleverly camouflaged under a native grass tussock.



Photo 21. Nest of an Australasian Pipit.

- **New orchid populations found**

Five new populations of coloured spider-orchids (*Caledenia colorata*) have been reported to us around Tailem Bend, Sherlock and Rockleigh. These will be prioritised for ground truthing next season as part of the Threatened Flora Program.

- **Update on the Black-eared Miner Project**

The Black-eared Miner project has had some challenges with weather and a delayed breeding season. The recent trip to Gluepot, whilst successful in locating a number of colonies, unfortunately found only 2 colonies that showed signs of nest building. Comparatively, the same time last year saw Black-eared Miner colonies containing nests with eggs and some that already had nestlings. One colony was targeted and 8 birds were caught for collection of genetic samples. Due to the difficulty in catching Black-eared Miners when they are not nesting, the trip to collect more genetic samples from the priority colonies has been postponed for a few more weeks.



Photos 22 and 23. Black-eared Miner at Gluepot. Photos courtesy of Tom Hunt.

- **Investigating regent parrot nests**

Melissa Burford has been supporting the Regent Parrot Recovery Team to explore ways to monitor nest success. In a recent discussion around the development of a National Recovery Plan for the Regent Parrot, the SA recovery team flagged about a lack of knowledge around nesting success in the regent parrot.

Through conversations and a grant from the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, experts from the Australian National University who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in studying nesting success in similar species (orange-bellied parrots, swift parrots and superb parrots) came to the Riverland and spent time with the team to install nest cameras and share their methodology on measuring nesting success.



Photo24. Team helping with Regent Parrot work.

This project has had invaluable support from the wetlands team to navigate and work around high flows making access to regent parrot nests challenging! The project is an exciting new collaboration and will give the recovery team an insight around clutch size, hollow requirements and fledging success.



Photo 125. A regent parrot nest at Katarapko. 5 eggs discovered on September 3 2022.

Hopefully this study will continue and further information around threats, and nestling health and condition before fledging can be gained, offering invaluable information that has not been studied well in Regent Parrots and can ultimately aid in their conservation management.

- **Undertaking vegetation assessments of previously decommissioned dams and survey for impacts of rabbit**

Ecologists Craig Gillespie and Toby Galligan met with contractors from Wattleseed Ecology to design a floristic survey of former dam sites in the Living Landscapes project area. The survey looks at dams which have recently been removed in order to restore natural hydrological processes.



Photo 136. Native vegetation regenerating at Little Oak Dam in Dangali Wilderness Protection Area.

The aim of the surveys is to find out how the recovering plant community develops, and at what point in time interventions are required to get the best results. Included in the survey is an assessment of rabbit impacts to inform control measures. Rabbits are expected to be the major inhibitor of plant recruitment at these sites now that goat and kangaroo populations are reducing. Fieldwork began in September to pilot the survey and further work on this will ensue as the season progresses.

- **Team effort to achieve monitoring despite the rain**

The landscape ecology team in collaboration with others, has almost completed the monitoring of burnt and unburnt Mallee vegetation at Calperum Station as part of the Commonwealth Government's Long Term Monitoring investigation of fire response. Due to the unusually wet season, the monitoring effort has been interrupted twice already with the team unable to continue each time because of impassable roads. A third trip has been scheduled for early November to finish it off. On the positive side, the plots burnt in early 2021 are looking amazing!



Photo 147. Post-fire regeneration of native Mallee vegetation in the monitoring sites in Calperum.

- Control works were undertaken collaboratively between district staff and Traditional Owners of the Kalparrin community to spray boxthorns on their property. Planned control works for the future include African lovegrass treatment and provide best practice treatment advice.
- Engagement continued between district staff, ARTC and their contractor regarding the rabbit infestations in Murray Bridge, Kinchina Conservation Park and Monarto Safari Park. ARTC will control spiny rush in their corridor in Rocky Gully Creek.

- **Success towards the Feral Pig Action Plan**

The district team has been working with landholders to remove feral pigs in environmentally sensitive areas. A methodical and gradual process of free feeding, working up to placement of traps, placebos and eventually poisoned baits is an exercise in patience which is now paying off. The combined efforts between landholders and the Riverland district team have removed a total of 21 pigs (and counting) from the landscape.

- **Continuing control of African Boxthorn**

More than 385 boxthorn plants have been sprayed across 74km of roadside, Crown Land parcels, 3 private properties and council land. This effort was undertaken by 2 district officers, private landholders, Berri Barmera Council and a contractor. More than 8 days of consistent effort were spent targeting this species in Barmera, Winkie, Loveday, Paringa, Lyrup and Lindsay Point. Some were previously known locations where retreatment was required as new plants appeared.

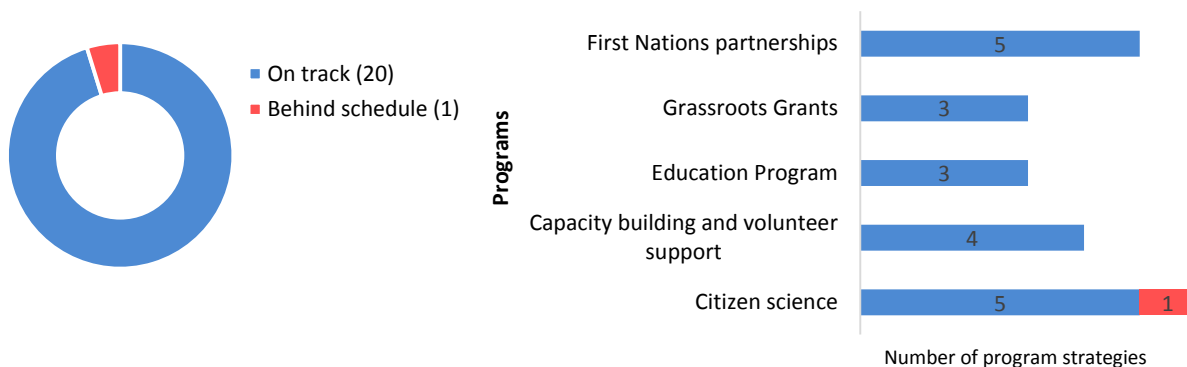
- **New District Field Officer**

The recruitment of a new District Officer creates more capacity for weed mapping and treatment work. Callum Isaacs commenced in the role in September and has already completed much of the training required to be a certified Pest Management Technician. Callum has begun monitoring incursion pathways and undertaking mapping of roadside weeds and is presently shadowing district officers with a variety of other tasks to learn about the role.



People at the heart of landscape management

Status of program strategies



Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

The Regional Landscape Plan provides the direction for our work to define the priorities and relevant focus areas for delivery. The table provided below indicates how program delivery is aligned and contributes to the focus areas under each landscape plan priority.

Program Focus Areas	First Nations partnerships	Grassroots Grants	Education Program	Capacity building and volunteer support	Citizen science
PP 1				✓	✓
PP 2	✓			✓	
PP 3			✓	✓	
PP 4		✓		✓	✓
PP 5		✓		✓	
PP 6				✓	✓
FP 3					✓

*Refer to Appendix 1

Program Progress summary

During the first quarter and moving into spring, opportunities to participate in monitoring and community events increases. Events included; Riverland Field Days, National Science Week events, teacher professional development sessions, Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) forum, citizen science awards and working with the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) ranger team.

Program quarterly highlights

- **Riverland Field Days**

The field days were a great success and gave the education team the opportunity to promote the new River Murray turtle program in the lead up to Turtle Month (November). Below is a small example of one of the fantastic outcomes of the field days:

"Ruby, a local primary school student, visited the landscape board tent at the Riverland Field Days and spoke to Cindy, our education officer, about the baby turtles on show. Ruby was gobsmacked to find out that we have 3 species of turtles in the river and amazed at some of the facts and features of our local species. After leaving the tent to attend dance practice, Ruby begged her mum to return to the field days later in the day to visit Cindy again to learn more about turtles. Cindy shared the fact sheets, posters and other fun facts about turtles and Ruby was absolutely engaged! Cindy shared the new teacher resource with Ruby - to pass on to her teacher to see if they could learn more at school. On Monday morning following the field days Cindy received an email (at 8:30am!) from the teacher explaining that Ruby had told her all about the field days, and the turtles and how she had begged her to get in touch to see if Cindy could come to the school and talk to the class. Cindy has since attended session which involved 28 children and 2 teachers!"



Photo 28. Education officer Ilyth Burton at the Riverland Field Days.

- **Work experience program**

Regional education officer, Ilyth Burton, has been doing a fantastic job of coordinating the work experience program. During this quarter, 4 students from 3 different schools did a combined 68.5 hours of work experience with landscape board staff. One of the students, in year 12 at Loxton High School, contacted the landscape board to express her interest in volunteering to gain more work experience in this field. She has now helped out the wetlands team with two frog monitoring sessions and due to her interest and willingness to learn, they have welcomed her to volunteer again for any future fieldwork.

A previous 2021 work experience student subsequently decided to base her year 12 research project on understanding the role of wetlands as an ecosystem. She developed a series of questions and interviewed team leader Darren Willis and used his responses as primary data for her research.

- **River Murray turtle education resources**

The education team finalised the landscape board's River Murray turtle education resources during this quarter. These include a comprehensive teacher resource, quizzes, activities and other add-ons such as posters, life cycle activity, quick quiz sheet, Kahoot and Blooket online question sets, Children's university quiz (for the Turtle-mania display) and a life cycle colouring sheet. The education team is very grateful to the Murray Bridge High School for assisting in the development of the resources, and piloting the draft resources.



Photo 29. The River Murray turtle educational resources were launched in term 3.

As part of promoting Turtle Month and the new educational resources, a call was put out to local schools to provide artwork featuring River Murray turtles which would then be used to help educate schools and community about our local turtle species. More than 400 pieces of artwork were received from schools across the region. The artwork was used as part of the display at the Riverland Field days and is to also feature in Turtle-mania displays in the Berri Visitor Centre, Renmark Library and Murray Bridge Library. The education team has also selected artworks to feature in the 2023 calendar.

- **Teacher Professional Development**

Term 3 teacher professional development sessions on the landscape board's priority 'Healthy Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands' were a great success. Thirty teachers from across the Murraylands and Riverland came to the sessions which were run at Long Island Reserve/Murray Bridge High School and Banrock Station. The sessions included a Welcome to Country from local Traditional Owners, information on the Waterwatch program, an overview of the 1Million Turtles Program, and the launch of the landscape board's new turtle resources, including a presentation from Murray Bridge High School about how they had successfully piloted the resource in their school.



Photo 30. Teachers learn about Waterwatch at the term 3 Murraylands teacher professional development session.



Photo 31. RMYC members with bird boxes made at the Meldanda activity day.

- **River Murray Youth Council (RMYC)**

The term 3 RMYC joint activity day was a great success with 14 students from 5 schools visiting Meldanda near Cambrai to learn from the local Landcare group about native birds, the importance of tree hollows as natural habitat and the role bird boxes play in providing additional habitat for many native species. Students made bird boxes to take home to put them in their backyards or on

their farms. Several students sent in photos of their bird boxes up in trees, some of which are already being used! Learning about native birds and bird box making was voted as one of the RMYC's highest priorities for 2022 at their initial planning workshop.

- **River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) ranger team**

This quarter, the RMMAC ranger team has been busy with a range of important work including heritage site protection and restoration at Chowilla Station, developing a heritage conservation plan for a burial site at Loxton, undertaking a range of training, negotiating an MOU with Crown Lands, speaking to local school groups, assisting DEW floodplain monitoring at Katarapko, Pike and Chowilla, visiting Flinders University and the SA Museum, and meeting with a range of stakeholders. The project is a proud partnership with RMMAC and is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the Landscape Priority Fund.



Photo 32. The RMMAC ranger team meet federal Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek in Loxton.

- **Monarto Safari Park Aboriginal Learning on Country (ALOC) project**

This quarter, the project has continued to support the park's bush tucker production program and the employment of Ngarrindjeri trainee Nick Sumner. This long-running partnership between the landscape board and ZoosSA has supported many local Ngarrindjeri community members to gain skills and qualifications as trainees and school-based trainees, with a number securing on-going, full time employment at the park.



Photo 33. Marcela Rosero (MRLB), Leon Dodd, Nick Sumner and Robyn Bishop at Monarto Safari Park.



Photo 3415. Chris Koolmatrrie, Aboriginal partnerships officer, and Lucy Sumner, RMMAC Ranger at the Riverland Field Days.

- The landscape board's First Nations partnerships team and the RMMAC ranger team attended the Riverland Field Days to promote programs the role of the ranger team. The display included photographs of the ranger team activities and a range of traditional tools and weaving which visitors could look at and discuss
- A range of First Nation's Welcome to Country ceremonies have been held at landscape board events this quarter, including education and citizen science community events. Welcome to Country ceremonies are an important way to show respect to First Nations and provide an opportunity for community members to meet members of local First Nation's communities.



Photo 165. Ngarrindjeri Elder Darryl Koolmatrice performing a Welcome to Country ceremony at a citizen science event near Tailem Bend.

- The River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) hosted the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) for the third in a series of groundwater training sessions to support First Nation's engagement into the Mallee water allocation planning processes. The trip involved a visit to Butcher's Soak and a monitored malleefowl mound near Kringin. The session was an opportunity to learn more about Mallee groundwater systems and for different First Nation groups to network and collaborate on water planning in the region.



Photo 186. Verna Kropinyeri and Uncle Derek Gollan at the Mallee groundwater field trip.



Photo 177. Murraylands District Officer Conway Johnson training the RMMAC Ranger team in the use of drones.

- Murraylands district officer Conway Johnson held a training session with the RMMAC ranger team in Berri on the use of drones. Conway, one of the board's Ngarrindjeri staff, is a highly experienced drone operator who uses the technology to identify and map aquatic weed infestations in inaccessible wetlands along the River Murray. The RMMAC rangers will be using their drone to inspect, map and monitor sensitive and inaccessible heritage.

- **First Nation's Partnerships collaboration with One Basin CRC and SA Drought Hub**

The First Nation's partnerships team has been supporting the One Basin CRC and the SA Drought Hub with their First Nation's engagement. Some of the early outcomes of this work have been a presentation at the One Basin CRC Partner Forum in Loxton by the River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (RMMAC) rangers, and the initial planning for a series of climate change yarning circles with the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation and the SA Drought Hub to be held in early 2023.

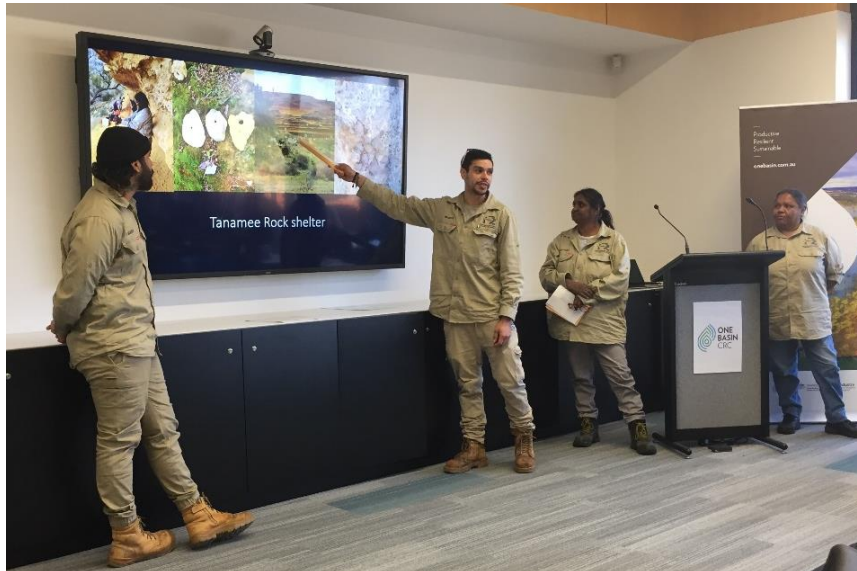


Photo 198. RMMAC rangers present at a One Basin CRC Partner Forum in Loxton.

- **Insect Investigators**

Citizen science staff visited Loxton North Primary School for a workshop about the Insect Investigators project. Previous workshops had to be undertaken online earlier in the year due to COVID-19, so it was a treat for the teachers and students to meet in person and get an update on what students had collected, the journey the samples had been on to Canada and back, and where to from here. The students were very engaged and had a go at creating phylogenies from plastic toys and giving a scientific name to a fictitious creature.



Photo 209. Loxton North Primary School kids developing their own phylogeny (tree) of creatures as part of the Insect Investigators workshop.

- Awards were presented for Outstanding Achievement in Citizen Science at National Science Week events conducted at Tailm Bend and Loxton. The recipients were really grateful to have their efforts recognised.



Photo 40. Brett and Marie Smith from Ellura Sanctuary with landscape board Chair Di Davidson.



Photo 41. Citizen Science project officer Sylvia Clarke, landscape board member Greg Cock and Alun Thomas (Scientific Expedition Group).



Photo 42. Phil Graetz with Greg Cock.

- Several children enjoyed going on a fungi walk as part of National Science Week event at Tailm Bend. They were so engaged at hunting for them and looking at their structure when they did find some!



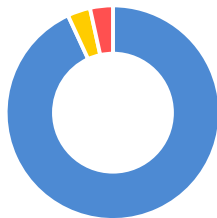
Photo 43. Children enjoying the fungi walk at Mowantjie Willauwar Conservation Park as part of the National Science Week event.

- District staff helped coordinate a meeting with Raukkan to discuss a collaborative property planning. This included Aboriginal Land Trust/Raukkan Clyde Rigney, Land Life, Tim Hartman (NAC), PIRSA weeds on Aboriginal lands coordinator Alexia Catford, and wetlands project officer Sam Hardy. Land Life is investigating Raukkan for suitability to invest in large-scale tree plantings (>50Ha) funded by private international investment. This includes planting for carbon absorption with mid to canopy woody plant species in Teringie Wetland and Gum Park. The aims are to create connectivity with a biodiversity corridor planting between the 2 sites, and an improved sense of belonging for the community. District staff will play an important role by assisting Raukkan with the pest plant and animal infestations that could impact the biodiversity corridor planting.
- **Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) forum**
District staff presented at the Murraylands Young Environmental Leaders (YEL) forum. The forum had a focus on Healthy Rivers and Wetlands and was a good opportunity to promote the Weed Warriors of our Waterways project. Taking the boat as a visual aid created a lot of interest from the students. Presentations were provided on the project weeds with live samples and pictures of works undertaken.
- **Australasian Weed Conference**
Many district staff attended the Australasian Weed Conference where they were able to network and information share with likeminded people from across Australia. There were a number of presentations throughout the conference regarding new control methods and research.



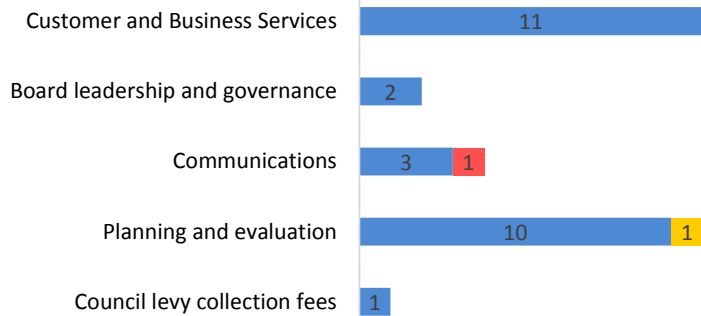
Foundational programs

Status of program strategies



- On track (27)
- Not started (1)
- Behind schedule (1)

Programs



Number of program strategies

Alignment of programs to the landscape plan priorities and focus areas

The Regional Landscape Plan provides the direction for our work by defining the priorities and relevant focus areas for delivery. The table provided below indicates how program delivery is aligned and contributes to the focus areas under each landscape plan priority.

Program Focus Areas	Customer and Business Services	Board leadership and governance	Communications	Planning and evaluation	Council levy collection fees
FP 1				✓	
FP 2				✓	
FP 3	✓		✓	✓	✓
FP 4				✓	
FP 5			✓		
FP 6	✓				
FP 7	✓	✓			
FP 8	✓				
SW 3			✓		

*Refer to Appendix 1

Progress summary

The new financial year has seen the continuation of support to the landscape board, committees, staff and the general public. A new Customer Relation Management (CRM) system is being developed to share knowledge and provide high level support to the public.

The landscape board has continued to be active in responding to referrals with reviews of state and federal policies including the first technical amendment to the planning and design code. Discussions have also been undertaken with local government planners and developers around impacts on threatened species.

Staff commenced participation in a national advisory group regarding knowledge brokering for national long term monitoring projects. A final report was also produced on the long term monitoring site at Calperum which was provided to stakeholders and local government.

Program quarterly highlights

- The media and communications team led the organisation's presence at the Riverland Field Days in September 2022, playing a vital role in planning the display and engaging with other organisations as sub-tenants. The result was a very well attended marquee, despite the number of total field days attendees being down on previous years, and the weather. Our marquee was very well received by the general public, partners, staff and landscape board members.



Photo 44. Riverland Field Days.







- The media and communications team has continued to deliver high quality work despite being a team member down. Restoring the team to full capacity should help to restore the expected level of throughput.
- Traditional media has been particularly successful over the past quarter with strong interest from the media and interviews requested for almost of media releases. The team circulated 13 releases for the quarter, with 16 requests for interviews. An additional 7 articles were published, although it should be noted that without a formal media monitoring system, the total number is likely to be much higher. The media list now includes 25 journalists across 10 media outlets. Additionally, the team has started to experiment with blog content to communicate more in depth pieces such as the decommissioning of Little Oak Dam which had an average time-on-page of more than 7 minutes.
- After a massive effort from all staff - most notably from the Investment and Information team's Information Management senior project officer - the records management transition project is now complete, and all organisational files have been transitioned into an appropriate landscape board-managed data storage location. As such, our region is now compliant with relevant records management legislation and the next phase of information management improvement for the region can begin, with a focus on adapting to the requirements of big data.
- Two spatial apps to improve data collection have recently been delivered by the investment and information team for use in the South Olary Plains Bird Survey and the Black Eared Miner Bird Surveys being conducted by the landscape ecology team. This will improve data collection efficiency and allow the ecology team to review results in real time.
- The investment and information team recently assisted the Limestone Coast Landscape Board with their deer control data capture apps for the September and October deer cull operation. This

experience was used to test and refine our own aerial cull operations data capture app for use in future operations north of the River Murray.

- The 2021-22 Annual Evaluation process was completed including the production of the Annual Evaluation Summary for the Board and Executive Leadership Team, and the Annual Highlights report for the community.
- The rubric for the *sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes* priority was completed, along with a definitions document and a data management plan. This finalised the rubric development for the 5 priorities in the Regional Landscape Plan. A process guide for undertaking the assessment of rubrics for the baseline evaluation was initiated.
- Approval and endorsement of the General Manager's group for the planning project officer to provide support, review and liaison to the other landscape boards as a key point of contact (between boards and with DEW) in progressing the new Regional Plans under the State Planning System over the next 12 months.
- Two staff participated in the International Evaluation Conference in Adelaide to glean the best contemporary evaluation methods from across the globe.
- Due to the outsourcing of classification work and internal support with some administrative tasks, the human resources advisor managed to catch up on the backlog that started building up in since April 2021 and is now back in control of daily human resources requirements and responsibilities.
- The backlog of leave reconciliations was is now up to date until February 2022, with March 2022 ready for sign off.
- Ten vacancies were advertised of which 5 were filled and others are still progressing.
- Six new recruits joined the organisation and 4 have completed all required induction training.
- A new performance management template was developed and rolled out across the organisation.
- A new induction program was developed and will be rolled out in Q2.
- The State of the Sector Reporting was completed by the due date of 22 July 2022.

3. Standard metrics reporting

The standard metrics are a defined and agreed short-list of measures the organisation counts for the purposes of communicating to the public and accountability to the executive leadership team and board members. These standard metrics quantify what has been delivered during the current quarter.

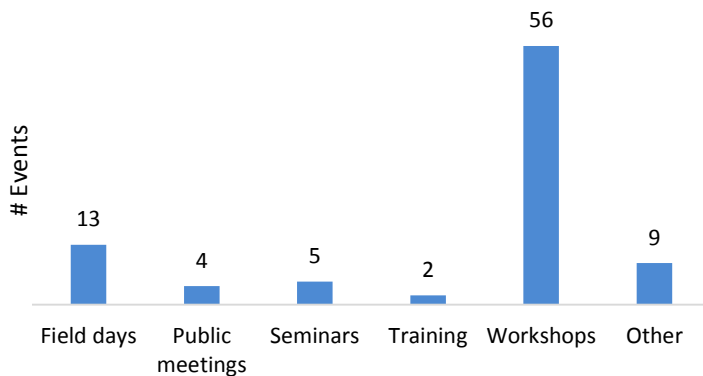
	Measure	Frequency							Q1 Actual
Area benefitted from pest animal control	Ha	Quarterly							369,373
Area benefitted from pest weed control	Ha								1,468.1
Area surveyed	Ha								1,523.1
Communication materials published	#								291
Compliance issues investigated	#								1
Development referrals responded to by landscape board staff	#								23
Events	#								89
Followers on social media	#								5508
Groups financially supported	#								56
Individuals engaged at events	#								1068
Land managers involved in coordinated baiting	Ha								14
One-on-one technical advice interactions	#								752
On-ground trials / demonstrations established or maintained	#								37
Participants at recognition volunteer events	#								31
Partnerships	#								110
Radio/TV/newspaper interviews conducted	#								2
Schools actively involved in the education program									31
Schools supported	#								95
WAA permits received and processed	#								2
Area covered by practice change	Ha	Annual							-
Area covered by species recovery actions	Ha								-
Area of revegetation	Ha								-
Area of wetlands and surrounding floodplain water regimes managed	Ha								-
Area treated by fire management action	Ha								-
External funds to levy funds	Ratio								-
Priority threatened species and/or ecological communities supported	#								-
Treatments implemented to improve water management	#								-
Volume of water returned to the environment	ML								-

Note: The shaded boxes above represent which priorities make up the total number of the quarter for each standard metric.

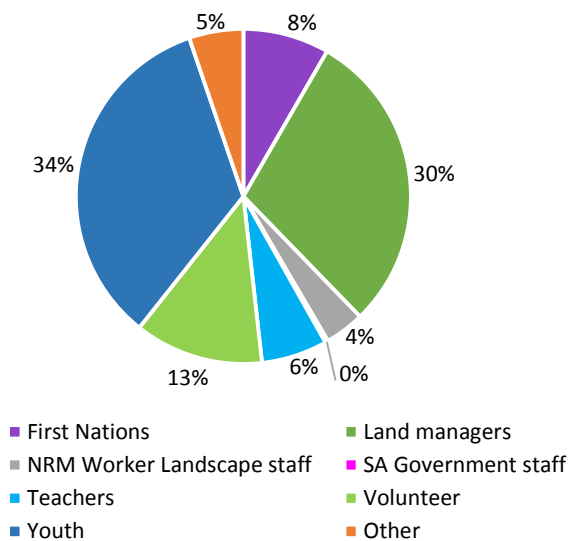
4. Stakeholder engagement

The landscape board seeks to engage with the community and diverse stakeholders through different activities, projects and media in order to work together towards long-term regional landscape outcomes. This section provides a summary of the stakeholder engagement during the current quarter.

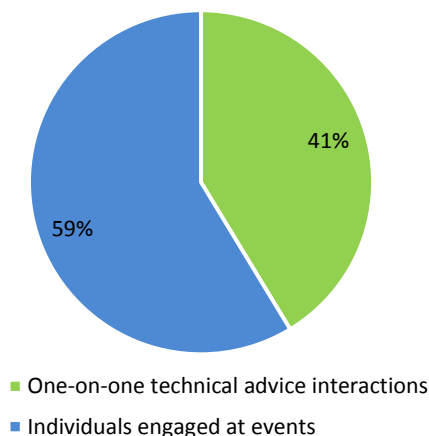
Type of events conducted



Type of individuals engaged at events



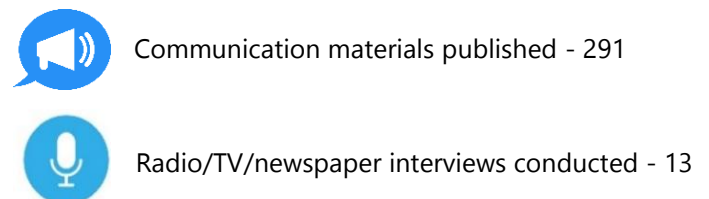
Split on how Individuals are engaged



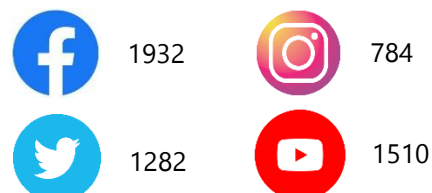
Key Partnerships



Traditional media produced



Followers on social media



5. Financial performance

The following summary of financial performance includes total expenditure by priorities and funding source in addition to expenditure through the disbursement of grant funds. Further detail regarding revenue and planned expenditure can be found in the [2022-2023 Annual Business Plan](#).

Table 1. Quarter 1 expenditure by priority by funding source.

Funding source	Annual revenue	Expenditure by priority						Total expenditure
		Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes	Sustainable water Use	Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands	Healthy natural landscapes	People at the heart of landscape management	Foundational programs	
Levy	11,781,409	286,808	940,031	209,345	194,583	491,068	436,723	2,558,557
Commonwealth	3,542,462	179,515	298,942	126,561	75,387	324,829	7,360	1,012,595
Other SA Govt Agencies	725,860	24,398	-	80,335	33,773	2,938	-	141,444
Other	526,852	12,058	5,136	15,489	3,661	8,162	2,568	47,075
Total	16,576,583	502,779	1,244,108	431,731	307,404	826,997	446,651	3,759,671

* Annual revenue in this table is based on currently known funding.

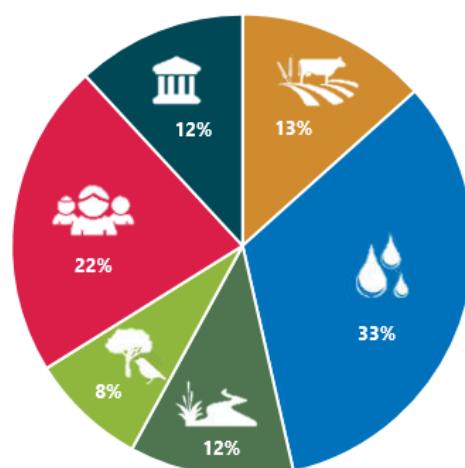


Figure 1. Percentage of expenditure for the quarter across priorities and foundational support.

The landscape board provides multiple opportunities for landholders and groups to apply for grants to undertake works to contribute to the implementation of the Landscape Plan. Table 2 and Figure 2 below provide information about the distribution of grant funds into our community.

Table 2. Grants disbursed by recipient category.

Category	Grants disbursed
Landholders	429,266.39
Volunteer Groups and NGOs	228,464.19
Local government	22,000.00
First Nations	187,413.00
State Government	18,750.00
Other	32,430.00

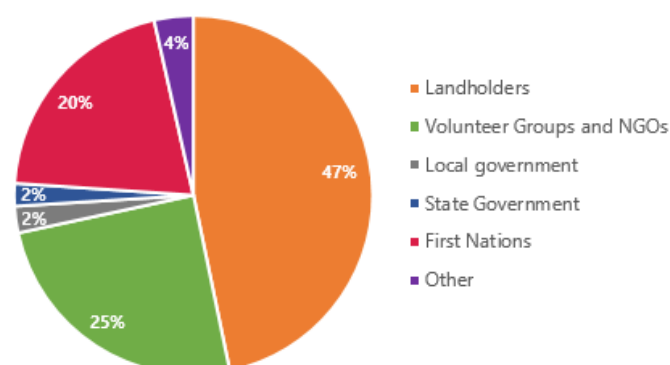


Figure 2. Percentage of grants disbursed by recipient category.

Appendix 1. Focus Areas for Priorities



Sustainable agricultural and pastoral landscapes

- SA1. Work with industry and farming groups to identify and address soil management issues to improve soil health and build resilience.
- SA2. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity.
- SA3. Promote and support the protection and enhancement of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation as part of a productive system.
- SA4. Promote and demonstrate best management practices to retain ground-cover and reduce erosion risk.
- SA5. Support land managers to build resilience in farming systems through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events.



Sustainable water use

- SW1. Work with the irrigation industry to optimise water use for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- SW2. Ensure sustainable water use by all water users in a changing climate.
- SW3. Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- SW4. Support water users to build resilience through monitoring and managing climate risks and extreme events.
- SW5. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species for improved biosecurity.



Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands

- RW1. Manage and deliver environmental water to build the resilience of targeted wetland and floodplain ecosystems.
- RW2. Actively manage watercourses for improved ecological outcomes in a changing climate.
- RW3. Deliver initiatives that improve conditions for threatened species and culturally significant species.
- RW4. Improve water literacy to develop the community's understanding of water management for productive, environmental and cultural outcomes.
- RW5. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species.



Healthy landscapes

- HL1. Work in partnership to manage total grazing pressure, including from over-abundant native species.
- HL2. Work in partnership to proactively manage fire in the landscape to improve or maintain condition of key ecological and cultural assets.
- HL3. Encourage targeted revegetation and restoration.
- HL4. Ensure future seed availability of native species for revegetation in a changing climate.
- HL5. Improve the level of protection for threatened and culturally significant species and ecological communities.
- HL6. Encourage integrated management of prioritised pest plants and animals and early detection of alert species.



People at the heart of landscape management

- PP1. Build and maintain strategic partnerships with, and between, stakeholders for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- PP2. Work in partnership with First Nations to manage the region's landscapes, protect and restore cultural values and assets, and build capacity.
- PP3. Partner with young people, foster their understanding, participation and leadership.
- PP4. Strengthen capacity through increased knowledge, skills and participation.
- PP5. Support community-led landscape management, providing resources to support community projects and practical action.
- PP6. Recognise and encourage volunteers and volunteer community groups and support them to work safely and effectively.



Foundational programs

- FP1. Develop the regional landscape plan and associated business plans.
- FP2. Implement an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework.
- FP3. Ensure contractual obligations that come with external funding are delivered.
- FP4. Continuously improve the information management systems that support evidence-based decision making.
- FP5. Regular communication of landscape board business.
- FP6. Accurate and timely financial, accounting and budgetary support services which are compliant with Australian Accounting Standards and government financial policies and procedures.
- FP7. Effective and efficient administrative services providing support to staff, the landscape board, and its committees.
- FP8. Maintain staff satisfaction through the management and delivery of human resources policy and programs

Note: The unique identifier for each focus area is used to demonstrate the alignment between the programs and focus areas under each landscape priority and does not indicate any level of priority between individual focus areas.

More information

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Landscape Board