



Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board

MINUTES

Acknowledgement of Country

The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board acknowledges First Nations people as the first people of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect the Peramangk, Kurna, and Ngarrindjeri peoples, past and present, who have cared for Yerta/Ruwe for generations, nurturing its life, stories, and landscapes. We recognise their deep knowledge, spiritual belonging and enduring connection to Country.

We are committed to walking alongside First Nations, listening, learning, and working together to protect and restore these lands and waters.

Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board Meeting #42

Date: 27/08/2025

Start Time: 9:35 am

Scheduled Finish Time: 1:00 pm (Lunch followed)

Location: Mt Barker Community Centre

Attendees: Board Members

Janet Klein (Acting Chair), Amelia Graham, Andy Lowe, Sarah Day and Leanne Muffet

Staff

Ben Della Torre (Manager Landscape Operations), Michaela Heinson (Manager Planning & Engagement), Wendy Telfer (Acting Manager Business and Governance), Nicole Bennett (Acting Manager Planning & Engagement), Alison Skinner (Team Leader Planning and MERI), Daniel Ball (Monitoring and Information Management Officer), Paul Wainwright (Team Leader Water), Brett Ibbotson (Program Manager Dam Education and Compliance), Caroline Dorr (Team Leader Regional Engagement) and Emilee Vidau (Executive Officer).

In Gallery

Apologies: David Greenhough, James Stacey, Chris West, Jock Harvey and Michael Garrod

Meeting Items

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair acknowledged Country and welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

1.2 Conflict of Interest Disclosure (arising from agenda items)

Nil conflicts of Interest disclosures arising from the agenda declared.

1.3 Consent Schedule

*The board **approved** and **agreed** the items on the Consent Schedule be adopted.*

Ministerial – to have more visibility – discussed the context of the ones received in this meeting cycle.

Moved: L Muffet

Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

1.4 Any Other Business (to be covered in item 4)

- Harmful Algal Bloom and HFLB response
- COP31

1.5 Minutes from the previous meeting

The board **confirmed** the minutes of meeting number 41, held on 25 June 2025 as a true and accurate record noting the following amendments:

- A Lowe to be added under Board Member attendees.
- Under item 2.4.3 in relation to the Water Resources Steering Committee (WRSC) Terms of Reference (ToR), it was noted the item was moved by A Muffet. To be amended to, "Item Moved by A Lowe".
- Under item 2.4 in relation to the WRSC ToR the item addressed an email provided by L Muffet which noted recommendations for the ToR. These recommendations are to be added to the minutes.

Moved: J Klein

Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings

- A Lowe provided an update on the WRSC ToR, confirming that the document will be circulated to the board out of session. A Lowe also advised that the Committee meeting will be rescheduled, with a new date to be confirmed.
- The Risk and Performance Committee (RPC) review of the Risk Register will be considered at the next RPC meeting, scheduled for 26 September.

Action

- 1) Amended ToR WRSC to be circulated to the Board out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board:

noted the status of actions arising from the previous minutes.

Moved: S Day

Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

1.7 Resolution Register

The board **noted** the Resolution Register.

Carried

Items (for noting or decision)

2.1 General Managers Report

- N Bennett provided a summary of the General Manager's Report, highlighting:
 - Adjustments have been made to the communication reporting to eliminate double counting of figures. As a result, reported numbers may show a slight decrease.
 - The water science bid submitted to the National Water Grid Authority for the WAP amendment resourcing is unofficially looking unsuccessful. Further funding options are now being explored.
- B Della Torre briefly spoke about a funding submission through DEW to support resilience of bird populations to the H5 Bird Flu outbreaks. It was noted HFLB should hear if it is successful in obtaining this funding in the next month. Discussion followed:
 - The funding aims to support threat mitigation for threatened species in the region, with a focus on offshore islands.
 - A Lowe raised concern about the inevitability of bird flu outbreaks in the region. B Della Torre agreed it is inevitable. A question was raised about whether the risk will increase in spring and be compounded in its impacts due to the algal bloom, the staff were uncertain.
 - The board suggested raising the issue with DEW and seeking their views on whether they anticipate an increased risk during spring.

Action

- 2) Contact to be made with DEW in relation to any perceived increased risk of H5 Bird Flu in spring.

Responsible Officer: B Della Torre

- Further discussion followed:
 - B Della Torre reported an increase in Freedom of Information (FOI) applications, primarily related to compliance matters.
 - L Muffet described positive feedback that she had heard on the “Now or Never” deer eradication program from the Chair of the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions Board, and stressed the importance of this work so that we don’t face the same problems as experienced on the east coast. It was suggested that telling the story of deer impacts in other parts of Australia could be useful in the media to create social license for peri-urban deer control. B Della Torre will contact B Christie.

Action

- 3) L Muffet to connect B Della Torre with B Christie and communication to be established.

Responsible Officer: B Della Torre

- S Day queried whether there has been a shift in messaging away from primary producers and towards hobby farmers in relation to dam compliance, staff confirmed:
 - Key messaging was outlined in the recent “Stewardship News”.
 - N Bennett confirmed that messaging is also being adapted through Current Recommended Practices (CRPs) for low risk water affecting activities, which will be reviewed late in the meeting.
 - Staff further confirmed that HFLB is set to receive approximately \$250,000 from the Landscape Priority Fund and Drought fund to support on farm water management initiatives.

The board:

2.1.1 noted the General Manager’s report.

Moved: L Muffet Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

2.2 Presentation – Progress Update – Illegal Dam Compliance Response.

- B Ibbotson presented to the board, highlighting:
 - A 2023 analysis of high-resolution aerial imagery identified several hundred unauthorized dams and enlargements in the region, despite a moratorium in place since 2013.
 - \$4.4 million has been allocated over four years, across three key project areas: communication, compliance and development of a change detection tool.
 - An engagement plan was developed by the Communications Team, initially intended for statewide rollout but later refined to focus on the region.
 - Media releases have generated significant public interest, both positive and negative. Raising awareness appears to be slowing unauthorised activity.
 - A statewide working group has been established to share learning and support other regions undertaking similar compliance efforts.
 - There has been strong engagement with the Crown Solicitors Office, including a session to discuss the issues, which was well received.
 - Compliance efforts have been prioritised by dam size and environmental impact, with positive outcomes including removal of unauthorised dams and correction of enlargements.
 - In 2025 to date:
 - 40 cases completed, including 9 s1047 notices, 1 revoked, 9 cautions issues, 13 cases noted with no offence, 3 WAA Permits issues, 7 S107 extensions grants, 1 appeal and 15 cases currently under investigation
 - There has been an increase in Freedom of Information applications relating to compliance matters.
 - Initial investigations into automated change detection tools are underway, with a SAAL proof of concept received and a trial to follow.
- Discussion followed:
 - S Day queried whether landholders bear the cost of dam removal or modification under a Section 107 notice; B Ibbotson confirmed this is correct.
 - J Klein queried land rehabilitation post removal, noting erosion and grazing pressure. B Ibbotson confirmed that provisions are included in notices to mitigate these risks.

- The board discussed whether any affected landholders could be eligible for grants and resources to assist with land rehabilitation. It was noted that this is difficult.
- L Muffet asked about evaluation of the compliance process and capturing lessons learned to assist with future programs. B Ibbotson agrees it is an area for further development.
- The board commended the handling of the program.

Action

- 4) Evaluation of the program to be planned with the MERI Team.

Responsible Officer: B Ibbotson

2.3 Presentation (and briefing) – Stewardship Program two years in.

- B Della Torre and D Ball presented to the board, highlighting:
 - The internal evaluation process included an anonymous staff survey, team focus groups, a summary report and a stewardship workshop.
 - Three key focus areas were identified: district planning, district structures, and role clarity.
 - Positive feedback was received on stewardship communications, support from project and support teams and the effectiveness of site visits.
 - Key challenges include district boundaries and planning, role clarity, workload management (notably during rabbit season), and inefficient data and tools.
 - Staff responded positively to the evaluation process, noting its openness, non-judgmental tone, and swift implementation of changes.
 - An updated stewardship structure was presented to staff on 26 August, addressing resourcing equity across district and incorporating staff feedback.
 - District planning is being developed collaboratively, including operational tools and district profiles.
 - Role definitions for Senior Stewardship officers and stewardship offices have been refined with staff input.
 - Five stewardship guides have been produced, with soil and dam enhancement guides currently under development. C Dorr was acknowledged for her role in consolidating these resources.
- Discussion followed:
 - The board commended the program's approach to change management and staff engagement, noting its value in identifying areas for improvement.
 - D Ball noted the evaluation model could be replicated internally for other programs.
 - A Lowe queried how community impact is captured and incorporating into MERI reporting, such as landholder engagement and roadside verge management. It was confirmed that this is through impact reporting that use surveys of practice change.
 - S Day added that evaluating the program from an external perspective would help demonstrate its impact to the community and stakeholders, providing insight into the effectiveness of the program.
 - The board queried whether the Stewardship model is unique to the board. B Della Torre confirmed that HFLB are the only ones operating under this model and there has been interest from other boards in this program model.

The board:

2.3.1 noted the progress of the Stewardship Program.

Moved: L Muffet

Seconded: S Day

Carried

2.4 Quarterly Project Progress Report: Q4 2024/25

- The Quarterly Project Progress report for Quarter 4 was taken as read. A Skinner noted the updated condensed format compared to previous versions and confirmed that budget details have been removed, as they are included in the finance reporting.
- Board discussion followed:
 - S Day queried how previous status or duration at elevated risk could be shown. A Skinner advised that while adding this detail may expand the report significantly, it could potentially be included as footnotes with

commentary comparing changes from the previous quarter.

- A Lowe noted his hope that HFLB is able to move towards incorporating quantifiable targets into progress reporting in future with the next Landscape Plan.

The board:

2.4.1 noted the Quarter 4 Project Progress Report.

Moved: S Day **Seconded:** A Lowe

Carried

2.5 Community Engagement Committee Update

- C Dorr spoke to the paper and highlighted:
 - The first meeting was held on 21 July, with appreciation noted for the board members' contributions, particularly for involvement in the Grassroots Grants Assessment process.
 - The Communication Plan for the Landscape Plan engagement was discussed in detail, and the WAP engagement processes were briefly discussed, with a dedicated meeting to be scheduled in September.
 - New members to the committee welcomed, Miranda Lambert from Adelaide Hills Council, and youth representatives Ethan Egglestone and Sophie Gordon.
- Discussion followed:
 - L Muffet noted the committee will be dynamic and energetic.
 - The board noted the minutes and agreed that the meeting minutes in future are to be circulated to the committee out of session for endorsement prior to being presented to the board for noting.
 - W Telfer recommended appointing the external members by name for remuneration purposes, with clause 2.5.3 added to the recommendations of this item.
 - A Lowe raised that while the ToR define COI, they don't outline how conflicts will be managed. The board agreed the wording should be consistent with other board committees and confirmed this update can occur out of session.

Action

- 5) Terms of Reference for the CE Committee to be amended out of session

Responsible Officer: C Dorr

The board, in block:

2.5.1 Approved the amended Terms of Reference for the Community Engagement Committee, with additional information about management of conflict of interest to be added consistent with the ToR for other board committees.

2.5.2 noted the Minutes of the 21 July 2025 Community Engagement Committee Meeting.

2.5.3 approved the appointment for Miranda Hampton, Sophie Gordan and Ethan Egglestone to the Community Engagement Committee.

Moved: A Lowe **Seconded:** A Graham

Carried

2.6 Landscape Planning Update

- N Bennett spoke to the paper and highlighted the following key points:
 - The upcoming Landscape Conversations Community Forums have been scheduled, noting board members should have received an email from M Garrod with this information.
 - First Nations engagement planning discussions are underway, with coordination across neighbouring landscape boards.
 - A Draft report from SA Futures Agency in relation to the 8 August workshop was received yesterday. This will be circulated to the board for review out of session.
 - The agenda and run sheet for the September planning workshop is currently being drafted. It was proposed that building on the outcomes of the 8 August workshop and community input we can develop a comparative analysis. A back casting approach is also to be explored.

Action

- 6) Draft report received from SA Futures Agency to be forwarded to the board out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

- Discussion followed:
 - The board queried registration numbers for the upcoming Landscape Conversations events. Staff confirmed that the Lobethal event currently has the lowest at 10 participants, while Mount Barker has reached capacity with 30 participants.
 - It was confirmed that the forums are not the only opportunity for landholders to provide input.
 - S Day requested that the agenda for the September planning workshop be circulated to the board for comment. Staff advised that this may not be feasible due to timing constraints.
 - A Lowe advised he will be an apology for the upcoming workshop.

The board:

2.6.1 noted the engagement plan and upcoming engagement activities.

Moved: L Muffet

Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

2.7 Draft 2024-25 Financial Statements and Carry-Over Request

- The draft 2024-25 Financial Statements and carry-over request was taken as read, S Jenkins noted:
 - An unexpended overspend of \$470,000 in levy-funded projects, attributed to lower than expected water levy income, changes to employee entitlement provisions, and program overspend.
 - The retained earnings forecast indicates a declining balance, with operational expenditure exceeding income.
 - Future board meeting will include regular reporting on financial forecasts.
- Discussion followed:
 - J Klein noted that M Garrod was confident that the financial position will stabilise, with 5 year financial planning underway. Noting the ongoing lobbying of the levy equalization project. W Telfer confirmed even with levy equalization there is still a projected dip.
 - The board queried whether the outstanding SA Water invoices would offset the revenue shortfall, S Jenkins confirmed we hope to receive these payments throughout the financial year.
 - L Muffet asked whether separating accounts from DEW will affect the Service Level Agreement. W Telfer confirmed this is currently under discussion and can provide an update in due course.
 - The procedural order of the Auditor General receiving the report prior to board review was queried. S Jenkins acknowledged this was not ideal but necessary due to scheduling, and confirmed they were reviewed and signed by M Garrod and D Greenhough. The board requested that in future if the scheduling does not align that financial statements are sent out of session.
 - The board raised concerns about the need to reassess operations if levy-funding is not increased, although agreed to monitor closely. Staff noted internal flexibility and cost-saving measures are being implemented.
 - It was queried whether these saving strategies had been implemented in direct response to the 2026-27 projection; staff confirmed this is the case as the overspend was greater than anticipated, although manageable.
 - S Day suggested using upcoming workshops to clarify strategic financial goals. W Telfer advised this would be addressed through the business plan. B Della Torre emphasized the importance of aligning ambitious targets with limited budgets and demonstrating outcomes achieved relative to expenditure.

Action

- 7) Briefing to be provided to the board in due course on the DEW Service Level Agreement update and the status of levy equalization.

Responsible Officer: M Garrod

Action

- 8) July 2026 RPC meeting to be scheduled for end of the month, with Financial reports to be sent out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board, in block:

2.7.1 noted that the draft Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board 2024-25 Financial Statements have been submitted to the Auditor General; and

Moved: L Muffet Seconded: A Lowe Carried

2.7.2 noted the request to the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) to carryover funds and associated expenditure authority from the 20224-25 financial year.

Moved: S Day Seconded: A Lowe Carried

2.8 Climate Ready Government Initiative

- A Skinner spoke to the paper and highlighted the following key points:
 - The Circular 7 introduces new criteria and reporting requirements for public sector employees.
 - As a phase 3 agency, HFLB has until June 2028 to implement these requirements.
 - Climate Risk will be incorporated into the Board's risk register.
- Discussion followed:
 - N Bennett advised that the board is awaiting account setup for carbon credits. Once received, HFLB will achieve Net Zero status. An update will be provided at the October Board Meeting.
 - The board expressed interest in maintaining visibility of this initiative and requested regular updates.

The board:

2.8.1 noted the requirements of the Climate Ready Government Circular.

Moved: L Muffett Seconded: A Lowe Carried

2.9 WAA Current Recommended Practices

- P Wainwright spoke to the paper provided, highlighting:
 - The Landscape SA Act 2019 recognises the board as a regulatory board.
 - The aim is to identify low risk WAAs and establish a best practice guideline that allows landholders to undertake these activities without requiring a permit, thereby streamlining the approvals and reducing processing times.
- Discussion followed:
 - The board queries whether the CRP's had been tested. P Wainwright confirmed they were trialed with contractors.

The board:

2.9.1 approved the draft Current Recommended Practices for Water Affecting Activities

- Fencing a watercourse or on a floodplain
- Desilting Dams

Moved: A Graham Seconded: A Lowe Carried

Standing Items

3.1 Work Health and Safety Update

- The paper was provided prior to the meeting was taken as read by the board, B Della Torre briefly noted a recent incident of a staff member at an all staff planting day.
- It was suggested that future reports include comparative data on incidence frequency across previous years.

Action

- 9) Comparative incidence data to be added to future reports.

Responsible Officer: W Telfer

The board:

3.1.1 noted the WHS update as at 5 June 2025.

Moved: A Graham Seconded: A Lowe

Carried

3.2 Board Member Activity Register

The Board Member Activity Register was taken as read.

The board:

3.2.1 noted the current register of meetings and events attended by the Chair and board members in their capacity as representatives.

Moved: A Lowe

Seconded: L Muffet

Carried

3.3 Board Forward Agenda

- The Board Forward Agenda was taken as read. J Klein invited suggestions for future meetings and workshops. The following items were noted:
 - The workshop with Peramangk remains a focus but will not happen for some time.
 - A Review of the brand strategy was proposed, particularly regarding social media and the limitations in reaching all landholders through current profiles. It was suggested this be linked with an update on the new website.
 - Climate risk planning was raised, with a focus on increasing awareness of climate exposure. Staff noted the work of J Butler on the Regional Net Zero Emissions Agriculture Strategy. Further staff noted the organisation's Emissions audit update is scheduled for the October meeting.
 - The board discussed whether a follow-up to the September Workshop on the Landscape Plan is required. It was agreed to revisit this after the session.
 - It was also noted that L Muffet will be an apology for the November workshop.

Action

- 10) J Butler's work on Regional Net Zero Emissions Agriculture Strategy to be sent to the board out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board:

3.3.1 noted the Forward Agenda.

3.4 Register of Interests

The board **noted** the Register of Interests.

Carried

3.5 Correspondence

The board **noted** the correspondence record provided.

Carried

Other Business

- 4.1
- Harmful Algal Bloom
 - S Day queried what our role is in progressing recent government announcements and ensuring the correct messaging is being disseminated in relation to the Algal Bloom.
 - B Della Torre noted that there is an official communication channel currently for the algal bloom, C Taylor has been involved in these discussions. Internal discussions are ongoing regarding how to mitigate similar issues in the future, noting a potential Landscape Priority Fund bid as part of this.
 - The board supported the recommendation to develop a communication plan to strengthen government messaging.
 - COP31
 - Currently in an informal planning stage.
 - The Deputy Premier has a strong focus on bringing biodiversity and climate conversations together and showcase this in SA. Noting themes of Ocean and land – direct correlation to our work. Energy transitions, First Nations engagement and building resilience. A Lowe noting SA Government are keen to launch a nature positive scheme.
 - In parallel they are running Heaps Good COP31, providing an opportunity for a civil network, seeking an inclusive and diverse space outside of official channels.

In Camera / Confidential Papers

In accordance with the Landscape SA Act 2019, section 23 (5) the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board orders the public be excluded to receive, discuss or consider any prescribed information or matter in confidence

5.1 Nil

Meeting Closure

- 6.1 **Next meeting:** Wednesday – 29 October 2025
Venue: Mount Barker Community Centre – Training Room
- 6.2 **Meeting close –** 1:10pm

Endorsed 	Janet Klein Acting Board Chair Hills Fleurieu Landscape Board 31 October 2025
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