

Marla Oodnadatta District Plan

2021 - 2023



Introduction

This plan provides an overview of the features of the Marla-Oodnadatta district, the key opportunities and issues relating to landscape management, and priorities for the Marla-Oodnadatta Landscape Group.

The Marla-Oodnadatta district lies in the far northwest corner of South Australia. The Stony Plains is a vast area of gently undulating gibber and gypsum plains. These are dotted with occasional lakes, claypans, some low hills and the floodplains of ephemeral watercourses draining toward Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre). In places the watercourses form major draining systems featuring broad floodplains with braided channels and occasionally permanent waterholes. The extensive stony desert tablelands and gibber plains feature low open shrublands including saltbush, bluebush and samphire and open tussock grasslands with species such as barley Mitchell-grass and lovegrass.

The district is vast, almost a quarter of the SA Arid Lands region but has a small population. Much of the land is managed by the Pastoral Community and Aboriginal-managed lands including Mt Willoughby, Mt Clarence and Mabel Creek. The few unique outback towns in the district provide important tourism opportunities and services to local people. National Parks and reserves are subject to co-management agreements with Aboriginal people.

Linked bioregions

A bioregion is an ecologically and geographically defined area with common characteristics such as geology, landform patterns, climate, ecological features and plant and animal communities. The majority of the district falls within the boundary of **Stony Plains** and also encompasses Simpson-Strzelecki Dune-fields, Finke, Great Victoria Desert and Gawler bioregions.

Size: 124,508km² (24% of the SAAL region)

Towns (population): Coober Pedy- 1762 (2016), Marla- 100 (2016), Oodnadatta- 204 (2016), William Creek- 10 (2016)

Aboriginal Nations: Arabana (south-eastern and eastern portion of district); (western); Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi (north-east); Eringa; Antakirinja Matu – Yankunytjatjara (northern); Tjajiwara Unmuru (north-west); Irrwanyere Mt Dare (northern)

Land use: Aboriginal land, pastoralism (predominantly cattle), mining and energy, tourism, conservation (public and private lands), recreation, service centres, towns

Catchment and key waterways: Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre) Basin. Neales River, Mound Springs, Algebuckina Waterhole

National Parks and Reserves: Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre) National Park, Witjira National Park, Kanku Breakaways, Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park

Key stakeholders:

- First Nations organisations, including Arabana Aboriginal Corporation, Antakirinja Matu – Yankunytjatjara Corporation, Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi Aboriginal Corporation, Walka Wani Aboriginal Corporation
- Pastoral community & other landholders
- Breakaways Co-Management Board
- Coober Pedy Council
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)
- Town dwellers of Coober Pedy, Marla, William Creek, Oodnadatta

- Local schools
- Industry and businesses
- Tourism
- Friends of Mound Springs
- Landholders including the agricultural community
- Community and volunteer groups

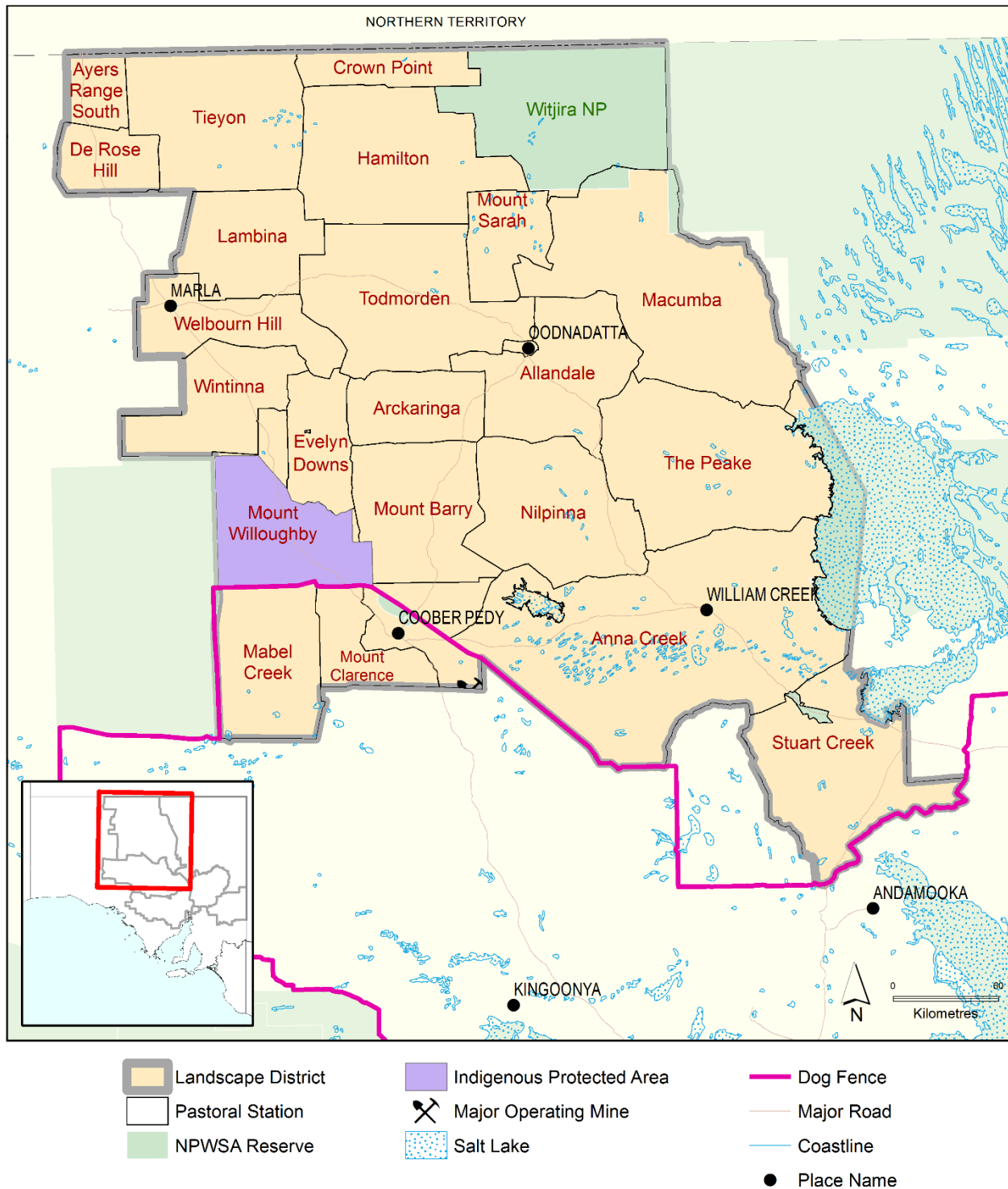


Figure 1: Map of the Marla-Oodnadatta district

Role of the Board

Under the Landscape South Australia (LSA) Act 2019, the Board's role is to undertake, promote and integrate the management of natural resources. Particular reference is given to land management, water resource management and pest animal and plant control. The Board operates as the relevant authority for a range of water, land protection and animal and plant control activities and works with the community in delivering its responsibilities under the LSA Act. Its roles include education and awareness raising aimed at practice change and adoption, encouraging and supporting legislative compliance, and enforcement when needed.

Role of the Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group

Landscape Groups are an important conduit for community input to landscape planning and design of the Board's programs. Groups work with local communities, to support the implementation of the Regional Landscape Plan and increase community awareness of Board programs within a Group's area.

Landscape Planning Framework



How this plan was developed

This plan was developed through a series of planning sessions with the Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group in 2021. Information was drawn from past planning documents, current projects and stakeholder knowledge.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This district plan will be reviewed each year with the Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group to evaluate progress against priorities and plan for the next year of activities.

VISION

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

SA Arid Lands regional priorities

Priorities

Focus areas



CLIMATE RESILIENT REGION

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

- C1** Ensuring climate risk is embedded in all Board business
- C2** Providing land managers with the knowledge and skills they need to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- C3** Exploring adaptation pathways to ensure communities are climate resilient



WATER MANAGEMENT

The region's water resources are managed judiciously

- W1** Planning, research & leveraging infrastructure investment to support the judicious use of groundwater
- W2** Maintaining hydrogeology to protect Great Artesian Basin springs and groundwater-dependent ecosystems
- W3** Understanding and managing surface water systems including the Lake Eyre Basin



SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Land management practices protect soil, vegetation and biodiversity

- L1** Effective pest plant and animal control protecting production systems
- L2** Addressing the threat of excessive total grazing pressure
- L3** Building land managers' capacity in adaptive agriculture, best practice land management and rehabilitation



PROTECTING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Intrinsic biodiversity values are protected and enhanced

- B1** Managing key threats to protect natural values
- B2** Taking action for threatened species and ecosystem recovery
- B3** Maintaining and improving the condition of Great Artesian Basin springs and water-dependent ecosystems


















PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

People and community are central to looking after our landscapes.

- P1** First Nations partnerships supporting cross-cultural knowledge sharing and landscape management outcomes
- P2** Supporting Landscape Groups to lead community action and education
- P3** Raising awareness of the region's natural values and connecting people to nature
- P4** Supporting community action to achieve land, water and coastal management outcomes




Marla Oodnadatta District priorities for landscape management



Priorities*	Landscape impacts	District Ranking ^	Alignment to Regional Priorities**
Restoring landscape function; reversing historical landscape degradation and managing roads for soil conservation	Historical land practices have degraded some parts of the landscape, resulting in changes in water flows, erosion, drying of the landscape, and loss of landscape function. (e.g. Neales River)	High	
Managing tourism impacts	Inappropriate visitor behaviour such as leaving waste, cutting timber, camping in sensitive areas, driving off track, or not driving to the conditions degrades the local environment, causes damage to vegetation, tracks or other infrastructure, and can upset stock.	High	
Managing total grazing pressure impacts	Contribute to grazing pressure and impact on vegetation. Damage to cultural sites. Land degradation, habitat & species loss, agricultural productivity loss where over-grazing occurs	High	
Managing water resources, quality (including towns); reducing wastage from free flowing bores; managing extraction of groundwater	Groundwater is a finite resource, and managed for the benefit of all users. Excessive water extraction can impact on other users and groundwater dependent ecosystems (including springs).	High	
Rangelands pasture management under future climate (diversification and other opportunities)	Climate change predictions for the district are for higher temperatures, declining rainfall and more extreme weather events. Support opportunities to adapt to a highly variable climate, diversify livelihoods, offset carbon emissions and maintaining social licence	High	
Populations of dingos/wild dogs	Stock losses, interbreeding with domestic dogs in townships	Med	
Feral pigs	Damaging to native vegetation, biosecurity, contaminate waterways	Med	
Pest predator species (foxes/cats)	Species loss/displacement. Changes to/failure of landscape ecosystem	Med	
Weeds (including buffel grass and cactus)	Reduction of resilience of landscape to cope with climate change. Reduction in stock nutrition from loss of feed variety. Outcompete native species. May reduce pasture productivity or have adverse impacts on production	Med	
Opportunities for learning/sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge on country	Better understanding of landscape and cultural values, management and traditions. Passing on knowledge to next generation	Med	
Feral herbivores (rabbits)		Low	

Mound springs	Water resource contamination, draw down on ground water reserve, landscape drying out, cultural desecration	Low	 
Mining exploration (e.g. fracking)	Unknown environmental consequences, contamination of water (surface and ground)	Low	 

*^Priority ranking considers the **magnitude** of the threat or opportunity (how **severe/influential** and how **widespread/ relevant**) it is, as well as the **reversibility** of its impacts.** Some district priorities may not be regional priorities for the Board.*

Marla Oodnadatta District - Current programs and opportunities

Issue	District Ranking	Current programs and opportunities	Status	Who	Regional Focus Area
 Climate Resilient Region					
Rangelands pasture management under future climate (diversification and other opportunities)	Medium	<i>Building Pastoral Sustainability project</i>	Current /2018-2023	SAAL LB	C2
		<i>Weather station network (on-going)</i>	Current /on-going	SAAL LB	C2
		<i>Projects involving drought resilience</i>	Current /on-going	SA Drought Hub	C2/C3
 Water Management					
Managing water resources, quality (including towns); reducing wastage from free flowing bores; managing extraction of groundwater	High	<i>Far North Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan</i>	Current /on-going	SAAL LB	W1
		<i>Improving Great Artesian Basin Drought Resilience (IGABDR) project – assisting landholders to maintain wells and water distribution infrastructure</i>	Current	Federal Government SAAL LB DEW	W1
 Sustainable Land Management					
Managing total grazing pressure impacts	High	<i>Kangaroo Management Partnership</i>	Current /on-going	SAAL LB	L2
		<i>Kangaroo management survey</i>	Current /on-going	Bush Heritage & RMIT	L2
		<i>Wild harvesting (kangaroos, camels)</i>	Current /on-going	Pastoralists, shooters, processors	L1, L2

Issue	District Ranking	Current programs and opportunities	Status	Who	Regional Focus Area
 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity					
Feral pigs	Medium	<i>Aerial pig shooting</i>	Current /on-going	SAAL, DEW	L1, B1
 People and Partnerships					
Managing tourism impacts	High	<i>Educational campaign targeting visitors</i>	Potential	SAAL LB SATC FROSAT OCA	P3
Opportunities for learning/sharing	Medium	<i>Everybody's Land Strategy</i>	Current /on-going	SAAL LB	P1, P3
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Medium	<i>Kids On Country</i>	Current /on-going	Nature Foundation, SAAL LB	P2, P3

Marla Oodnadatta Landscape Group actions

District Issue	Opportunity	Actions	When	Collaborate	Status
Climate Resilient Region					
Rangelands pasture management under future climate (diversification and other opportunities)	<i>Workshops/projects involving drought resilience</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Host Estimated Breeding Values workshop or webinar. Stock selection for suitability to climate</i> 2) <i>Engage with SA Drought Hub representative based at Port Augusta</i> 3) <i>Develop/support workshop/projects for district</i> 	June 2022	SAAL LB, MLA, CPAS, Pastoralists	Complete
Water Management					
Managing water resources, quality (including towns); reducing wastage from free flowing bores; managing extraction of groundwater	<i>Host pastoral Bootcamp, support soil conservation workshops</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Host Bootcamp (March 2023) as Cricket & Conversations event</i> 2. <i>Encourage/support water accounting trials</i> 3. <i>Co-Host/Promote Col Stanton soil conservation/grader workshop</i> 	March 2023 TBA 2022/23	SAAL LB, DEW Water Team, Col Stanton, Janet Walton, SA Water, Pastoralists, OCA, Traditional Owners	Ongoing
Mining exploration (e.g. fracking)	<i>Raising awareness of future mine activities</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Monitor new applications</i> 2. <i>Response to community consultation</i> 3. <i>Report damaging activities</i> 	Potential	SAAL LB, DEW Water Team, SA Water, Pastoralists, OCA, Traditional Owners	Not started
Mound springs	<i>Supporting protection activities</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Education/awareness raising within networks</i> 2. <i>Promoting best practice management</i> 3. <i>Involvement/support in Lake Eyre Basin project</i> 	Mid 2022	DEW, SAAL LB, Pastoralists, Traditional Owners, Friends of Mound Springs	Ongoing
Sustainable Land Management					

District Issue	Opportunity	Actions	When	Collaborate	Status
Restoring landscape function; reversing historical landscape degradation and managing roads for soil conservation	<i>Healthy Soils workshop or similar</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit current knowledge/practice and future/emerging needs 2. Find key people to coordinate people & process, funding 3. Host Healthy Soils workshop 4. Recording hotspots and reporting 5. Training opportunities 	June 2022	SAAL LB, Pastoralists, Traditional Owners, SA Road Action Group, DPTI	Complete
Populations of dingos/dogs	<i>Promoting data collection</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FeralScan reporting, workshop to promote use 	Sept 2022	SAAL LB, Pastoralists, Traditional Owners	Complete
Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity					
Managing total grazing pressure impacts	<i>Advocate for landscape scale control</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide feedback to SAAL LB 2. Support applications for grant funding 3. Discuss issue with Parks and opportunities for collaborative effort despite not having large funded program 4. Gather existing data from any known sources e.g. FeralScan 5. Support region wide survey 	TBA 2023	SAAL LB, DEW Parks, PIRSA	Ongoing
	<i>Increase awareness of problem in district/region</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote existing Apps for data capture 2. Training (and promotion of) in existing tools e.g. FeralScan (e.g. GPS locations, provide feedback on App) 	Sept 2022	SAAL LB, FeralScan	Complete
	<i>Aerial culling program (camels)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canvas interest for large scale aerial control program 2. Training (and promotion of) in existing tools e.g. FeralScan 	TBA	SAAL LB, DEW, PIRSA, Maree Innamincka Landscape Group	Ongoing
Feral pigs	<i>Increase awareness of problem in district/region</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote existing Apps for data capture 2. Training (and promotion of) in existing tools e.g. FeralScan 3. Aerial control program 	TBA	SAAL LB, FeralScan	Ongoing/Complete

District Issue	Opportunity	Actions	When	Collaborate	Status
Pest predator species (foxes/cats)	Support predator control activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote existing Apps for data capture Support desexing programs Felixer trials/shared asset 	Late 2022	SAAL LB, DEW, PIRSA, FeralScan, OCA	Ongoing
Weeds including buffel grass and cactus	Community/pastoral support and education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement and action event in Coober Pedy 	TBA 2023	SAAL LB, DEW, PIRSA, OCA, Councils	Ongoing
Feral herbivores (rabbits)	Awareness raising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote FeralScan app 	Late 2022	SAAL LB, DEW, PIRSA, FeralScan, OCA	Complete
People and Partnerships					
Managing tourism impacts	Provide local knowledge to tourism/visitor affiliated organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Raise issue with Landscape Board (re lack of facilities with DPTI, OCA, Livestock SA, Tourism SA) Collect data from tourists about where they get their information e.g. friends, Outback Travel Code, websites Work with OCA to identify nicer/better free-camping spots- focus impacts rather than spread them Providing relevant information to tourism and camping sites (e.g. WikiCamps) so people understand where camping can/cannot occur 		SAAL, OCA, Livestock SA, Tourism SA	Ongoing
	Education resource (video) for visitors to outback	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collect data from tourists about where they get their information e.g. friends, Outback Travel Code, websites Liaise with OCA, Tourism SA etc to develop educational video for people visiting outback 	TBC 2023	SAAL, OCA, FROSAT, Tourism SA	Ongoing
Opportunities for learning/sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge on country	Support/host "Kids on Country" (or similar) event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Target specific groups to engage in activities or learning opportunities on country Deliver or support program to engage Aboriginal youth in activities- possibly at Wintinna Sticky Beak 	TBA 2023	Traditional Owners, SAAL LB, Pastoralists, DEW	Ongoing

List of Group achievements in past 2 years

- Cricket & Conversations- Pastoral event (2019 & 2021)
- Native Plant Propagation- Coober Pedy and Oodnadatta
- Business of Managing Pastoral Country workshop
- RFDS Virtual Ladies Lounge- Online Paint Along with artist James Down from Broome Gallery
- WildDogScan app training
- Stress Free Stockmanship - Bruce Maynard Workshops (March 2019)
- Top 10 Travel Tips Signs
- Marla-Oodnadatta Field Day (March 2019)
- Wintinna Stickybeak Day (June 2022)

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