



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 #43

Date: 29/10/2025

Start Time: 9:35 am

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

Location: Mt Barker Community Centre – Training Room

Attendees: Board Members

Janet Klein (Acting Chair), David Greenhough (Online), Amelia Graham, Andy Lowe, Sarah Day, James Stacey, Chris West, Jock Jarvey and Leanne Muffet

Staff

Michael Garrod (General Manager), Ben Della Torre (Manager Landscape Operations), Michaela Heinson (Manager Planning & Engagement), Wendy Telfer (A/Manager Business and Governance), Renee Clarke (A/Manager Business and Governance), Alison Skinner (Team Leader Planning and MERI), Caroline Taylor (Coast and Marine Project Officer), Caroline Dorr (Team Leader Communications and Regional Engagement) Paul Wainwright (Team Leader Water Resources) and Emilee Vidau (Executive Officer).

Guests

Grant Pelton (Deputy Coordinator, Algal Bloom Response, DPC)

Apologies: A Graham

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.

Moved: S Day

Seconded: C West

Carried

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

- Follow up discussion on HAB.
- Community Engagement Committee
- Drought Discussions and presentation.

1.5 Minutes from the previous meeting

The board **confirmed** the minutes of meeting number 42, held on 27 August 2025 as a true and accurate record.

Moved: A Lowe **Seconded:** L Muffet

Carried

1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings

The board:

noted the status of actions arising from the previous minutes.

Moved: C West **Seconded:** A Lowe

Carried

1.7 Resolution Register

The board **noted** the Resolution Register.

Carried

Items (for noting or decision)

2.1 *J Harvey joined the meeting.

Presentation – Overview of status and SA Gov response to HAB

- G Pelton presented to the board, the following key points were noted:
 - Noted a profound impact on first nations connection with sea
 - Provided information on the biology of karenia and addressed community misinformation regarding the algae's origin.
 - Discussed the causes of the bloom noting; increased nutrients from 2022-23 Murray River flood, cold water upwelling in summer 2023-24, and a marine heatwave with water temperatures 2.5 degrees above normal.
 - As of October 2025, testing and monitoring are underway at 92 coastal and 37 offshore sites across the state, with weekly testing in metropolitan Adelaide, the Coorong, and routine monitoring in aquaculture areas.
 - An algal bloom hotline has been established for reporting dead fish and sick marine life.
 - Government response (Phase 1): \$28 million (shared equally between Commonwealth and State) for science, research, communication, community, and industry support.
 - Summer plan: \$102.5 million allocated for ensuring South Australians can enjoy summer (\$16 million), supporting coastal businesses and communities (\$48 million), and advancing research and environmental protection.
 - Confirming the summer plan is a positive start, but preparation of a longer-term recovery plan is essential.
- Further discussion followed:
 - L Muffet queried if mental health support is being extended to SA Government employees as the front-line workers, G Pelton confirming that EAP has available since April.
 - S Day queried if there are volunteering opportunities to help with the sea grass meadows. G Pelton advised that volunteering opportunities are still active and \$1.2m in the package for sea grass restoration. G Pelton also noted that there is a trial with blue carbon program for around approx \$3-4m with sand fire wet and dry meadows.
 - J Harvey noted that the current funding for the limestone reef will provide 14 ha, it was queried if the reclaimed water pumped to the gulf will be diverted to aid in meadows success. It was confirmed that this is a possibility and being considered.
 - A Lowe commented the nutrient load going in, although 2024 is the lowest recorded, but noted this would still be much higher than historically and we cannot rule out nutrient from the land as causative and sustaining pressure. J Harvey countered with aside from the current bloom issues, it would be beneficial to focus on the gulf health as an ecosystem, and the long-term solutions that can be implemented.
 - J Stacey- what has happened in other parts of the world in comparison – the longest one globally has lasted 2 years and will often have an annual bloom, there is a global increase in trend. We are unique with how the water moves in our gulf which makes it challenging to forward plan and believes there is potential it will re-occur. What is the ongoing monetary plan if it was to occur annually.
 - Noting south coast, KI, southern Yorke Peninsula that had the bloom earlier have already pretty well cleared.
 - S Day has this been used to catalyst conversations with upstream Murray River states in terms of nutrient loads. G Pelton provided response of current circumstances.
 - L Muffet questioned if we are the only state to have seen this, G Pelton confirmed this is not the case and there was a bloom in Coffin Bay and west coast of Tasmania also, but not for this duration and scale.
 - SARDI Algal bloom science office is being established, this will be considered nationally.
 - C West – with COP31 potentially coming, with or without COP does this event potentially create conversation

around climate change, in community forum it does regularly come up. The politics around that is where it becomes challenging. The role that the community plays, and community-based organizations have in building awareness that's where the groundswell from the bottom up will help.

- M Garrod – forecast that the current funding is just the tip of the iceberg, the recovery planning for this is where the Landscapes Boards and community can come into discussion with consultation. The immediate need is to get the summer plan imbedded prior to this process.
- A Lowe – changes in the marine environment and restrictions placed in parts of the gulf. The view that more people will turn to freshwater fishing. There is discussion around stocking programs, and we need to be careful how this is implemented for introducing native species for a fisheries purpose, things like trout are a different conversation all together. Further information on this would be great to have.
- W Telfer – regarding the communications arch, the correspondence is around the natural occurrence of the bloom, is there a way to change the communication towards more of here are things we can do to help. G Pelton confirmed this shift is starting to happen.
- M Harper - talking to preparedness planning, are there plans and teams being considered for future events that may occur. G Pelton advised that teams could be built however the issue raised is something that agencies are feeling noting the cascading and compounding events. We are spending more money on responding things rather than preparing and mitigation. J Stacey touching on that preparedness doesn't get the same amount of funding because politically, it doesn't affect enough people.
- S Day - is there modelling being done on the pattern of these events to help move forward– economic impact and cost modeling is being done. G Pelton advised that modelling on economic impact is being done.
- C Taylor – noting conversation from community groups on the Fleurieu, wanting to crowd fund. A lot of people are looking for information on what people can do, how they can help. G Pelton is happy to link people into the department. C Taylor questioned the public want to know when to start recovery, G Pelton advised the short answer is to begin now. This will be a collaborative approach for environmental restoration.

2.2 Presentation – Coastal Action Plan Update

- C Taylor presented to the board, highlighting:
 - The initial Coastal Action Plan (CAP) was released in 2007, the aim of the plan is to direct priorities for investment and aimed to be implemented in a partnership approach.
 - CAP captures natural coastal assets and conservation assets across the region, it does not relate to infrastructure.
 - The CAP is not a statutory document rather a plan for all land managers in the region.
 - The methodology of the plan was discussed, noting the regional priorities are created by the entire plan, whereas local cell actions are specific and provide mini-plans to each area.
 - Extensive technical reviews took place throughout the update, and additional inclusion on estuary and nearshore marine habitat mapping, biota species and vegetation per cell as well as first nations engagement.
 - Due to time restraints GIS analysis was not able to be conducted.
 - 7 regional priorities have been derived from the plans update.
 - A final draft is close to completion and will for to land managers and stake holders for review. At which point document design and finalization through DEW communications team will take place, with the aim of a late summer launch.
- Further discussion followed:
 - The board commended the quality of the update and expressed interest in receiving regular updates.
 - The board showed interest in the trajectory and change over the last 17 years and targeted outcomes. C Taylor noted that this was lacking in the previous plan and confirmed collaboration with MERI to capture outcomes moving forward.
 - S Day queried how this will link into the 5-year plan. M Garrod confirmed that Coastal Marine will be covered comprehensively thanks to this update.

2.3 General Managers Report

- M Garrod provided a summary of the General Manager's Report, highlighting:
 - Following publication of the meeting pack, results from the second pulse employee survey were released, showing a strong 84% response rate. Improvements were observed in clarity of role expectations, career progression, and feeling heard. Psychosocial wellbeing ratings were positive, with three quarters of staff self-assessing as good or very good. Staff will review the findings at Tuesday's staff meeting.
 - Resourcing Challenges were noted and will be discussed further in item 2.9 and 2.10.
 - The agency welcomed R Clarke from the Murraylands Riverlands Landscape Board, who will fill the Manager –

Business and Governance position during the recruitment period.

- The stewardship program had a strong presence at the weeds and pest conference. M. Garrod emphasised that the agency is leading the way with its stewardship program. B Della Torre noted that HFLB delivered three presentations at the event.
 - The board was recently informed of approximately 100 feral goats in the Nangkita area, which came as a surprise. In addition to the Autumn ground shooting program, a partnership with PIRSA has been announced for a spring aerial shoot program in the Nangkita region.
 - The positive outcomes of the dam compliance program were discussed briefly, noting only 25% of cases have required formal compliance action under section 107.
- Further discussion followed:
 - S Day commented on nature-based solutions and the shift towards nature for people and climate that came from the NRM Regions Conference and what that would look like for HFLB. W Telfer noted state planning is not yet aligned; securing SA-based solutions is underway.

The board:

2.3.1 noted the General Manager's report.

Moved: L Muffet **Seconded:** S Day

Carried

2.4 Landscape Plan - Engagement Summary

- M Heinson spoke to the paper and highlighted the following key points:
 - 57 people attended the Landscape Conversations, with 21 providing feedback via survey or email (19 through the survey). The feedback largely reinforced existing insights held by the agency.
 - There was a strong emphasis on the importance of community-led stewardship.

The board:

2.4.1 noted the feedback received through the 'Landscape Conversations' community forums to shape the new Landscape Plan.

Moved: L Muffet **Seconded:** S Day

Carried

2.5 Quarterly Project Progress Report: Q1 2025-26

- M Garrod spoke to the Quarterly Project Progress report for Quarter 1 and highlighted the following key points:
 - Red traffic lights were noted for the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) amendment, due to a significant resourcing concerns.
 - Amber light flagged for retrospective Water Affecting Activity (WAA) approvals, noting generally there is no appetite for retrospective approvals at the state level.
 - There has been a delay in First Nations engagement for the Southern Fleurieu Action Plan.
 - Net Zero emissions is primarily a paperwork process; offsets are available, and carbon credits are ready to be purchased.

The board:

2.5.1 noted the Quarter 1 Project Progress Report.

Moved: L Muffet **Seconded:** S Day

Carried

2.6 Resilient Hills and Coasts Climate Partnership

- A Skinner spoke to the paper, highlighting:
 - Sector Agreement was recently reviewed.
 - Noted the provided overview of 2025-27 Activity Plan
- Board discussion followed:
 - L Muffet asked about the key outcomes achieved from the agency's investment. A Skinner advised that this information is available in the 2024-25 Annual Report.
 - S Day queried whether the Resilient Hills and Coasts climate partnerships, the Coastal Action Plan, and the five-year plan are aligned in their language and approach. W Telfer clarified that the Resilient Hills initiative

focuses primarily on partnership, while the board's plans are directed towards the community, stakeholders, and nature. These approaches are not in conflict, but the board's plans have a broader scope.

- The board suggested noting the partnership in our Landscape to aid in the connection between the two.
- The board further requested regular updates on the partnership.

Action

- 1) Circulate the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Resilient Hills and Coasts Climate Partnership out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board:

2.6.1 noted the Resilient Hills and Coasts Activity Plan 2025-27.

Moved: C West

Seconded: J Stacey

Carried

2.7 Draft Annual Report (Excluding Audited Financial Statements)

- W Telfer spoke to the paper and highlighting:
 - Two small edits will be made, including the correcting the placement of N Bennetts' acting term and updating Grassroots grants figures.
- Discussion followed:
 - S Day queried whether additional information could be included regarding challenges in resourcing and finance. W Telfer advised that the current template is structurally limiting, and staff were unsure if this was the appropriate forum. M Garrod suggested that a small amount of context could be added to the Chair's foreword.
 - A Lowe raised the two public complaints received. B Della Torre noted that both complaints were reviewed by the Ombudsman SA, with no administrative error found.
 - The board queried the absence of positive feedback in the report. Staff confirmed there is currently no process in place to capture this information.

Action

- 2) Edit D Greenhough's foreword in the annual report to include additional information regarding the agency's resourcing position.

Responsible Officer: M Garrod

The board, in block:

2.7.1 Noted and provided feedback on the draft Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board 2024/25 Annual Report (excluding financial statements).

Moved: A Lowe

Seconded: L Muffet

Carried

2.8 Minor WAP Amendment – Biodiverse Carbon Planting

- L Abraham spoke to the paper and highlighted the following key points:
 - CSO advice was sought regarding the proposed approach and wording, alongside stakeholder consultation.
 - 8 formal submissions were received from 25 consultations, several stakeholders advocated for requiring a WAA Permit to ensure regulatory oversight.
 - The SAFPA submission was discussed noting their submission to the Minister noting they do not support the PPSA submission. This additional submission is due to SAPA also being PPSA members.
 - The WRSC supported a permitted approach, and an action was taken to confirm this change with stakeholders.
 - The Water team does not anticipate an additional administrative burden from the extra WAA Permits.
 - The wording has been updated and is with CSO for review. The adoption package and consultation will then be sent to the Minister.
- Discussion followed:
 - J Harvey queried the permit mechanics, including application length, fee, and processing time.
 - The board queried the minimum scale of plantings; L Abraham confirmed scale will be driven by commercial

benefit.

- L Muffet asked if the Water team has the compliance capability to monitor additional permits. P Wainwright noted follow-up is often not conducted at the end of a WAA, relying on landholder honesty. M Garrod added that compliance will be challenging, as plantings can be observed but commercial benefit cannot be confirmed.
- The board agreed they would like an update in 12 months.

The board, block:

2.8.1 noted recent stakeholder consultation undertaken and the feedback received as documented in the Stakeholder Consultation Report.

2.8.2 noted the proposed policy change to require landholders to obtain a WAA permit before undertaking biodiverse carbon plantings after considering the strong advocacy from stakeholders and guidance from the Water Resources Steering Committee.

2.8.3 delegated the final approval of the adoption package to be provided to the Minister [for an amendment to the EMLR WAP to enable *biodiverse carbon plantings*] to the Chair of the H&F Water Resources Steering Committee, and the Board Chair.

Moved: C West

Seconded: J Harvey

Carried

2.9 Water Resources Steering Committee Update

- The Water Resources Steering Committee Update was taken as read. P Wainwright delivered a presentation on the DEW Water Science Project Plan, highlighting resourcing deficiencies the following key points were highlighted:
 - There are significant concerns regarding funding, noting the Water Science Project Implementation plan will cost \$1.184 million.
 - DEW's in-kind contribution for the 2025-26 implementation was shown to be \$685k, leaving a \$499k funding requirement from HFLB.
 - As LHF have a 2025-26 budget of \$427k for the WAP amendment process, there is a shortfall of around \$70k.
 - The water science is essential to inform policies for the amendment.
- Discussion followed:
 - M Garrod confirmed a Cabinet submission is currently being drafted, with the hope of lodging before the end of November. It is very possible that an outcome will not be known before March.
 - Several additional resourcing options are being explored by both DEW and LHF, noting the priority of the program.
 - A Lowe queried if an options paper could be put forward with timelines and implications, to enable meaningful discussion.

Action

3) WAP Amendment resourcing options paper to be put to the WRSC, and subsequently to the board.

Responsible Officer: P Wainwright

The board:

2.9.1 noted the issues discussed at the HF Water Resources Steering Committee meeting on 17 October 2025

Moved: A Lowe

Seconded: C West

Carried

2.10 * A Lowe left the meeting

Risk and Performance Committee Update

- The Risk and Performance Committee update was taken as read; W Telfer noted the following:
 - C Young, external committee member has been appointed to a position in Western Australia but will remain a part of the committee.
 - Glide pathways work on high and extreme risks have proven valuable, the committee will continue to review these each meeting.
 - Cashflow issues remain; close micro-management will continue. S Jenkins noted that shifting away from DEW accounts could either add to or mitigate these risks. R Clarke countered that there is still significant work to be done in this area.

The board, in block:

2.10.1 noted the update from the Risk and Performance Committee (the committee) meeting held on 26 September 2025.

2.10.2 noted the glide pathways for risks with a residual rating of high and extreme in the Risk Register.

2.10.3 noted the WHS-14 Work Health and Safety and Injury Management Policy.

Moved: L Muffet

Seconded: J Stacey

Carried

2.11 Expression of Interest – First Nations Artwork

- C Dorr spoke to the paper provided, highlighting:
 - Expression of Interest is currently open and is due to close on Monday, 3 November 2025.
 - The primary purpose of the artwork is to inspire and feature in the next Landscape plan.
 - The selection panel is set to include representatives from all three nations, a HFLB staff member and a board member to be appointed as chair. C Dorr noted that the initial inclination is that the board member appointed should be female.
 - There is potential to commission more than one artist.
 - It was noted that the current EOI submissions include no applications from Peramangk; however, there are several applications still pending submissions.
- Discussion followed:
 - S Day was recommended and appointed as chair by the board.

The board, in block:

2.11.1 Appointed a Board member to Chair the assessment panel.

2.11.2 Noted the culturally informed and transparent procurement process undertaken for the First Nations artwork commission.

2.11.3 Noted the continued involvement of Aboriginal organisations and representatives in the assessment and selection process.

2.11.4 Supported the use of the commissioned artwork as a central visual identity for the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Plan and related communications.

Moved: J Stacey

Seconded: C West

Carried

Standing Items

3.1 Work Health and Safety Update

- The Work Health Safety Update was taken as read. B Della Torre highlighted the following key points:
 - No incidents had occurred since the August board meeting
 - Staff training is in progress for working on roadsides and driving with a trailer.
 - The review of the contractor WHS induction process has been finalised.

The board:

3.1.1 noted the Work Health and Safety update as of 14 October 2025.

Moved: C West

Seconded: J Stacey

Carried

3.2 Finance Update – as at 30 September 2025

- The Finance update was taken as read, S Jenkins noted:
 - The calculated totals in Attachment 3.2.1 are incorrect due to a formula error; however, this error did not affect the data in Attachment 3.2.2.
 - The predicted totals in Attachment 3.2.2 indicate a minor overspend, due to ongoing salary negotiations for the new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

- Discussion followed:
 - D Greenhough requested that an updated attachment 3.2.1 be circulated for noting out of session.

Action

- 4) Circulate attachment 3.2.1 with amended figures to board members out of session.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board:

3.2.1 noted the financial reports for the period ending 30 September 2025

Moved: L Muffet

Seconded: D Greenhough

Carried

3.3 Board Member Activity Register

- The register was noted as read. M. Garrod highlighted that, with the upcoming Board Performance Review, there is an opportunity to assess the relevance and ongoing need for the Board Member Activity Register.

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: C West

Seconded: J Stacey

Carried

3.4 Board Forward Agenda

- The forward agenda was taken as read. M Garrod advised that the November workshop may involve a site visit with Karl Telfer; however, Karl has confirmed he is unavailable on the current date. M Garrod sought confirmation on whether a date change was possible, and board members indicated they were open to this.
- S Day proposed that the March workshop focus on Climate and Nature Risk Assessment, which the board agreed to.

Action

- 5) Send Doodle Poll to board members to obtain availability for site visit with Karl Telfer.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

Action

- 6) Update the forward agenda for the March Workshop to focus on Climate and Nature Risk Assessment.

Responsible Officer: E Vidau

The board:

3.4.1 noted the Forward Agenda.

3.5 Register of Interests

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

Carried

3.6 Correspondence

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

Other Business

4.1 Debrief of HAB Presentation

- W Telfer noted that whilst the governments focus is the implementation of the Summer Plan rather recovery it is difficult for the board to get involved.
- The board agreed to defer the conversation to a future meeting, allowing time for a longer and more meaningful discussion when the schedule permits.

- **Community Engagement Committee**

- L Muffet reported that the CEC met last week and had the opportunity to provide feedback on the WAP planning. L Muffet further confirmed that information regarding this committee will be shared with the board at the next board meeting.

- **Drought discussion and presentation**

- J Stacey suggested a presentation on drought resilience and the potential to reach out to A Zimmermann. The board supported this.

7) Update the forward board agenda to include a drought resilience presentation.

Responsible Officer: B Della Torre

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 – 10 December 2025

Venue: Aldgate Oval Hall

6.2 Meeting close – 1:31pm

Endorsed 	David Greenhough Presiding Member Hills Fleurieu Landscape Board 11 February 2026
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