

Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and
Improvement Framework 2026-31

Purpose

This MERI Framework outlines Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu's approach to monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-31.

Background

The **Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-31** (RLP) provides a roadmap for collective action to care for land, water and nature. It lays out a vision for the region and objectives for landscape management under the five priority areas of Community, Climate, Land, Water and Nature. It identifies strategies and actions needed to achieve the plan's objectives, and these may be undertaken by different organisations and groups that work in the region. The plan also identifies desired outcomes for each priority area ('what success looks like') and a number of specific targets (page 2).

There are multiple objectives for monitoring and evaluation of the RLP:

- **Provide accountability** to the board and investors through reporting on planned activities and deliverables, and demonstration of board impact
- **Enable learning** from project/program outcomes to inform management decisions and program design
- **Evaluate collective impact** to show what has been achieved through the plan and inform future priorities.

Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu (LHF) is committed to understanding the impacts of its projects, programs and strategic plans and to continuous improvement. Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) supports this commitment. This MERI Framework provides an overview of how LHF will evaluate progress against the RLP and its impact on landscape health. The framework is supported by a MERI Plan containing operational detail for LHF staff. The MERI Plan is a working document that can be updated if there are changes or improvements to available data or data collection methods.

Monitoring and evaluation occurs at three scales (page 3):

1. **Board operations** – actions/ activities undertaken by or on behalf of LHF.
2. **Board impacts** – short and medium-term outcomes that are attributable to board operations.
3. **Collective impact** – longer term outcomes that are contributed to by numerous actors. These are often at the regional level and attribution to a particular organisation or project is difficult.

In the RLP, short-term outcomes are considered to be those that occur directly as the result of actions and may be immediate or occur over weeks or months. Intermediate outcomes generally occur within one to five years, and long-term outcomes for landscape health may occur beyond the life of the plan. It is important to note that these are guidelines only and the actual timeframes are dependent on the nature of the work and intended outcomes.

Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan - Summary

Vision for the region:

Healthy and resilient landscapes cared for by whole-of-community stewardship



COMMUNITY

Everyone caring for our landscapes

- P1** Foster stewardship of land, water and nature
- P2** Walk alongside First Nations in looking after Watta / Ruwe / Yerta (Country)



CLIMATE

A net zero, climate resilient region

- C1** Transition to net zero emissions
- C2** Build landscape and community resilience



LAND

Healthy, productive land supporting people, industry and nature

- L1** Protect, manage and restore land and soil health
- L2** Future-proof our agriculture
- L3** Reduce the adverse impact of weeds
- L4** Reduce the adverse impact of pest animals
- L5** Reduce landscape damage from impact-causing native species



WATER

Sustainable water management and healthy waterways

- W1** Ensure fair and inclusive access to water
- W2** Protect and restore environmental flows
- W3** Strengthen on-farm water use efficiency
- W4** Improve water quality



NATURE

Protecting and restoring native ecosystems and wildlife

- N1** Retain and protect existing native ecosystems
- N2** Restore and expand native ecosystems at scale
- N3** Recover threatened species and ecological communities

What success looks like (Desired outcomes)

- People value the land, water and nature of our region, and act to protect them
- First Nations people continue their cultural responsibilities for Country, and their knowledge is respected and supported through self-determined partnerships
- Communities, businesses and governments invest together in land management
- Strong partnerships deliver coordinated, landscape-scale outcomes.

- Land managers and industries understand and are adapting to climate risks
- Landscapes, biodiversity and communities are resilient to heat, drought and other extreme events
- Primary producers have adopted low emissions-intensity farming practices
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation are built into programs and partnerships across the region.

- Soils are healthy, productive, protected from erosion and nutrient loss, and resilient in dry times
- Land managers adopt regenerative agriculture practices
- Priority pest animal and weed species are eradicated, new incursions are prevented, and established pest animals and weeds are managed to reduce their impact
- Impact-causing native species are effectively managed to reduce landscape damage.

- Water access is fair, secure and inclusive, supporting ecological, industry, cultural and social needs
- Water quality and flows sustain people, production and nature
- Rivers, wetlands and estuaries are healthy and connected from ranges to sea
- Land-based activities are not adversely impacting waterways, estuaries, coasts or marine environments
- Communities and industries are engaged in water planning and play an active role in water stewardship
- Water storage and use is efficient, minimising waste

- Native vegetation is protected and restored at scale across the region
- Threatened species and ecological communities are recovering
- Coastal and marine ecosystems are healthy and resilient to climate impacts
- Biodiversity protection is embedded in legislation, planning codes and industry practice

Regional targets (SMART targets)

Regional target (C1)

Regional target (L1)

Regional target (L4)

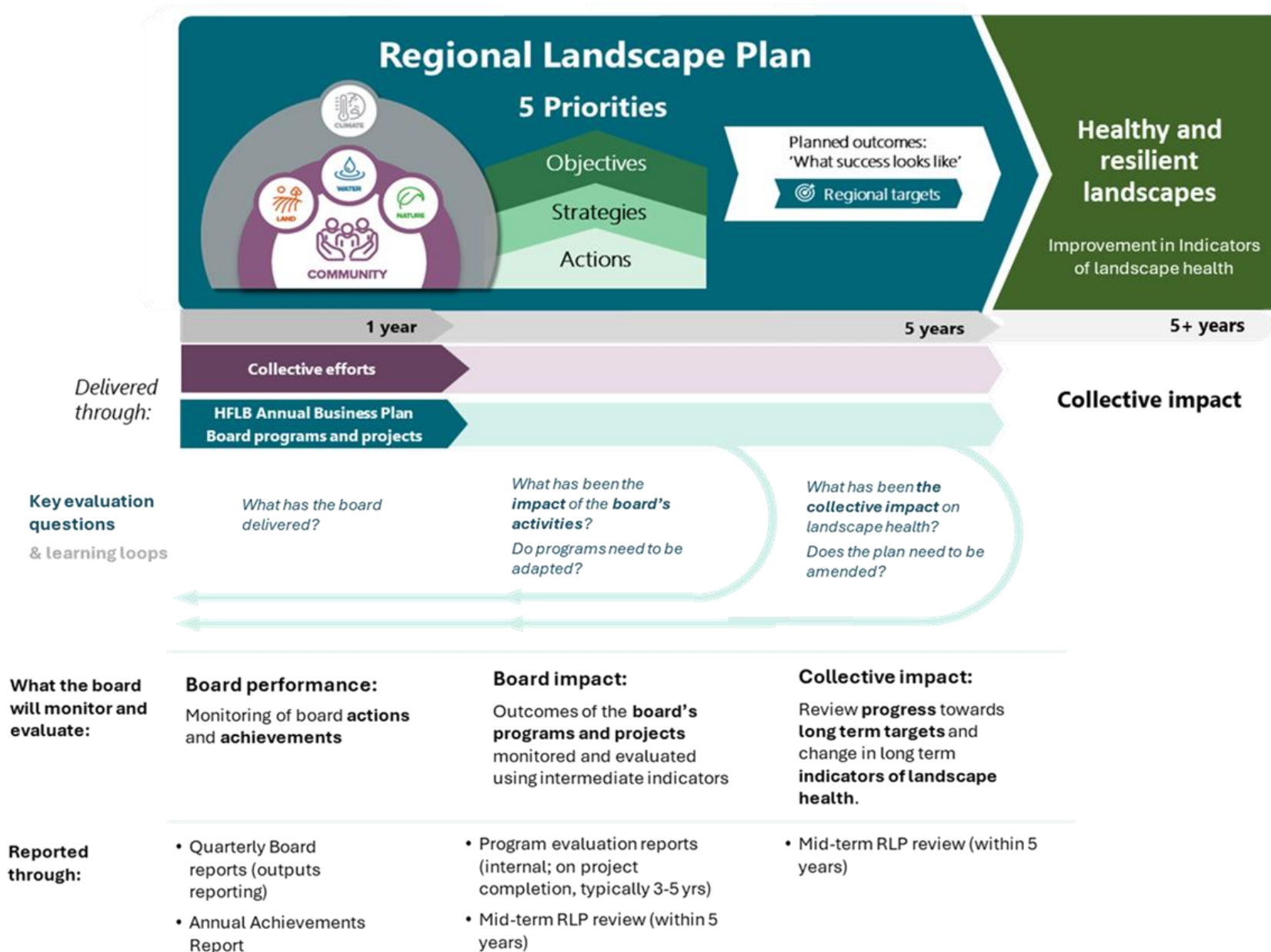
Regional target (W1)

Regional target (N2)

Regional target (N3)

* Regional target summaries are provided on page 6

HFLB Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



Board Operations

LHF activities (actions contributing towards the Regional Landscape Plan) are monitored through the collation of standard outputs. Output reporting occurs quarterly and covers the wide range activities undertaken by LHF staff, for example:

- Provision of advice
- Site visits
- Capacity building events (workshops)
- Weed control
- Pest animal control
- Revegetation
- Compliance checks
- Water affecting activities assessment
- Planning referral assessment

The board does not aim to collect or report on the specific activities and actions undertaken by the many organisations that contribute towards the Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan, excepting projects delivered in partnership.

Board Impacts

LHF projects are supported by a program logic (also known as a theory of change) which describes how a project or initiative is intended to work, and the changes (outcomes) that are being sought.

LHF will assess the short and intermediate outcomes of its activities, the majority of which fall into two categories:

1. Those designed to improving land managers' knowledge, practices and capacity to undertake work – such as advice, training and/or financial support.
2. On-ground works that directly improve site condition or reduce localised threats – such as revegetation, fencing, weed control and or pest animal control.

Given the range and extent of board activities across its programs, LHF prioritises the evaluation of impact indicators that best inform program learning (such as where anticipated impact is uncertain).

An example program logic is shown on page 6.

Collective Impact

Healthy, resilient landscapes are the long-term outcome sought by the RLP. Landscape scale change requires collective effort across government agencies, non-government organisations, industry, community groups, and land managers across the region.

Collective impact is assessed by the change in **long term indicators of landscape health**, noting that observed changes are not attributable to any one program or organisation, and may be influenced by broader drivers such as climate or markets.

LHF accesses data from a range of sources (including other agencies and organisations) to monitor change in landscape health over time. The status of landscape health indicators at the beginning of the plan are shown below.

Long term indicators of landscape health

Indicator	Status	Trend
<i>Climate</i>		
Carbon emissions ¹	 Poor	 Unknown
<i>Land</i>		
Soil acidity ²	 Poor	 Stable
Groundcover ²	 Very good	 Stable
Weeds ²	 Good	 Getting worse
Pest animals ²	 Good	 Variable
<i>Water</i>		
Groundwater ²	 Good	 Stable
Waterway health - stream flow days	 Good	 Getting worse
Waterway health - Aquatic macro-invertebrates ³	 Poor	 Getting worse
Waterway health - freshwater fish ²	 Poor	 Getting worse
<i>Nature</i>		
Native vegetation cover (percentage cover)	 Fair	 Stable
Native flora ⁴	 Poor	 Getting worse
Native fauna ⁴	 Very poor	 Getting worse
Terrestrial protected areas ²	 Fair	 Stable
Marine protected areas ²	 Very good	 Stable
Seagrass ²	 Undefined ⁶	 Unknown
Reef ecosystems – Fish species richness ⁵	 Undefined ⁶	 Unknown
Reef ecosystems – kelp cover ²	 Good	 Getting better

1. Ironbark (2023) HF Regional emissions snapshot, May 2023.

2. DEW (2023) Trend and condition report cards.

3. DEW (2024) Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Region PWRA ecological condition assessment 2022. DEW technical report.

4. Percentage of native flora threatened. HFLB (2026) HFLB Action Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities 2026-2040.

5. Green Adelaide Reef Ecosystem Monitoring. A subset of reef indicators is reported, however these were last assessed prior to the algal bloom.

6. No agreed threshold for assigning condition status.

Notes on Regional Landscape Plan Targets

There are six specific targets in the RLP, none of which can be achieved without collaboration.

Target C1: Net zero land and marine-based emissions in the Hills and Fleurieu Region by 2050

Regional emissions are currently estimated using land use data and national industry averages for emissions. As emissions reduction is a long-term goal that will not be achieved in the life of the RLP, we are seeking to track the change in emissions over time. The collection and reporting of region-specific emissions data rely on the availability of business and industry reporting.

Target L1: Erosion risk on agricultural land is kept to under 5 days a year

The number of days at risk of erosion is reported for the Central Hills and Fleurieu district as part of the DEW Trend and Condition Report Cards. The next set of report cards are expected in 2029, allowing them to be incorporated into a mid-term review of the RLP. The 2023 report card provides the baseline for looking at change over time.

Target L4: Eradication of feral deer and goats in the region by 2032

LHF, along with a range of partners, are targeting feral deer and goat eradication across the region through the Regional Grazing Pressure Management project. Progress against these targets will be judged using expert knowledge supported by metrics such as effort (time) per animal controlled. The assumption underlying this is that the lower the number of animals in the landscape, the greater the time required per animal removed.

Target W1: New Water Allocation Plans for the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges that balance competing needs for water and support climate resilience are completed and implemented.

This target differs in nature to the other targets as it represents a change to the authorising environment around water use rather than targets for on-ground change. The flow on effects of new Water Allocation Plans (WAPs) will likely be both difficult to measure and, in some cases, take years to become apparent.

This target relates to both the completion of amended WAPs, and an evaluation of their adequacy in balancing competing needs and supporting climate resilience.

Target N2: Native vegetation cover is restored to at least 30% within priority bioregions

Native vegetation cover is assessed using remote sensing. The eight IBRA Associations identified as priorities for restoration (and their % native vegetation cover in 2026) are as follows: *Hahndorf* (24%), *Mount Wilson* (23%), *Inman Valley* (23%), *Kerby Hill* (25%), *Mount Compass* (29%), *Mount Rapid* (17%), *Sandergrove* (12%), *Goolwa* (10%). These represent ecological communities that have less than 30% native vegetation where reaching the restoration target is feasible.

Target N3: 78 priority threatened species and 7 priority threatened ecological communities have reduced risk of extinction by 2040

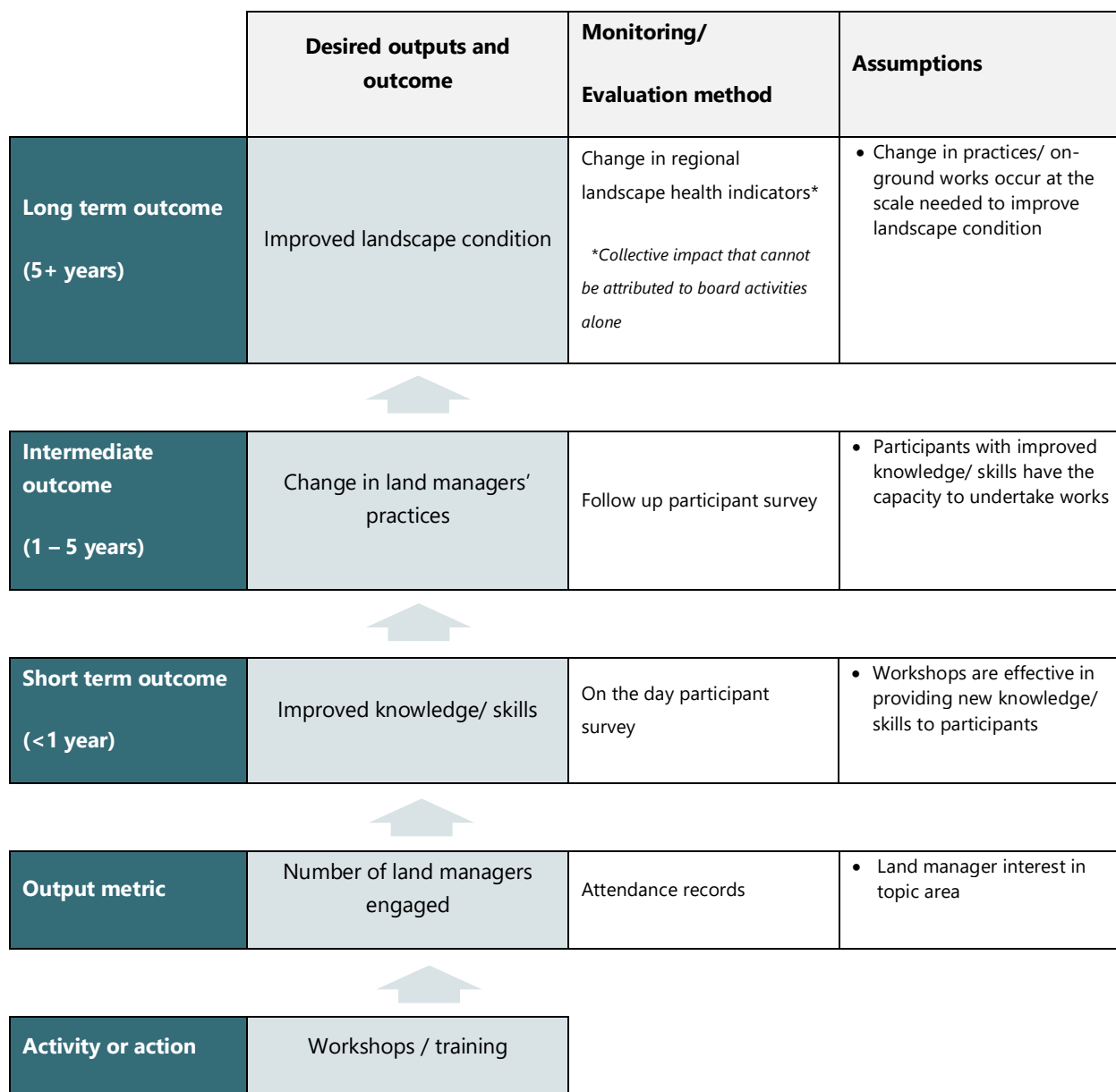
The *HFLB Action Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities 2026-2040* describes 42 plant species, 36 animal species and 7 threatened ecological communities which are a high priority for action. The 2040 target falls outside of the current RLP however there will be a progress report to be conducted in 2030. Progress will be tracked by looking at changes in conservation assessment indicators including:

- Occupancy, distribution, size and number of populations for species
- Extent and/or condition for ecological communities.

Any changes to conservation rating will also be reported.

Example program logic

This shows a simplified program logic for LHF-run workshops to improve land managers' knowledge and/or skills in land management, where workshop participation is voluntary.



As noted above, landscape scale change is created through collective effort and is not generally measured for individual projects. Using the program logic, suitable data collection points are identified which can be used to support (or refute) the program logic.

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