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, Kaurna, and Ngarrindjeri peoples, past and present, who have cared for Watta/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 #47

Date:	24/06/2026		
Start Time:	9:37 am	**Scheduled Finish Time:**	1:00 pm (Lunch followed)
Location:	McLaren Vale Visitor Centre		
Attendees:	Board members David Greenhough (Chair), Janet Klein, Andy Lowe, Jock Harvey, Leanne Muffet, Amelia Graham, Sarah Day, Chris West and James Stacey Staff Michael Garrod (General Manager), Ben Della Torre (Manager Landscape Operations), Michaela Heinson (Manager Planning & Engagement), Renee Clark (Manager Business and Governance), Brett Ibbotson (Dam Compliance Manager), Alison Skinner (Team Leader – Planning and MERI), Caroline Dorr (Team Leader – Communications and Regional Engagement) and Emilee Heinrich (Team Leader - Business Support). Guests Kane Aldridge (Watertrust Australia, Principal)		

Apologies:

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.

1.3 Consent Schedule

- The Board discussed the revised structure of the consent schedule. M Garrod noted that items included in the consent schedule should continue to be read and reviewed by Board members, and that the consent schedule documents discussed would be included in the main agenda pack again moving forward.
- D Greenhough noted that the Instrument of Delegations would be removed from the consent schedule for brief discussion later in the meeting.

2.3 Instrument of delegations

- It was confirmed that the Instrument of Delegations will continue to delegate authority to the Presiding Member, with relevant delegations flowing through to M Garrod and key staff as appropriate. Where the Presiding Member is unavailable, authority will not automatically transfer to the Deputy Chair and will instead be referred to the full Board for consideration and approval.

- Advice received from Landscape Services confirmed that there is no requirement for the Minister to formally appoint a Deputy Chair. Any delegation to the Deputy Chair will be administrative in nature.

The board **approved** and **agreed that** the items on the Consent Schedule be adopted, with the exception of the Instrument of Delegations.

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

The board **approved** the Instrument of Delegations, noting that it had been removed from the Consent Schedule for separate discussion.

Moved: *J Stacey* ***Seconded:*** *A Lowe*

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

- D Greenhough discussed the structure of the *Any Other Business* agenda item moving forward. It was agreed that strategic discussion items would be managed through the Board's forward agenda and workshop program where appropriate, to ensure sufficient time for consideration and discussion.

1.5 Minutes from the previous meeting

The board **confirmed** the minutes of Meeting No. 46, held on 29 April 2026 as a true and accurate record.

Moved: *A Graham* ***Seconded:*** *C West* ***Carried***

1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings

- J Klein noted that the action arising from the April Board meeting discussion on Local Planning and Development had not been included in the Action Register.

Action

1) PlanSA presentation on local development to be added to the Action Register.

Responsible Officer: *E Heinrich*

The board:

noted the status of actions arising from the previous minutes.

Moved: *L Muffet* ***Seconded:*** *C West* ***Carried***

1.7 Resolution Register

The board **noted** the Resolution Register.

Carried

Items (for noting or decision)

2.1 Watertrust Australia Update

- K Aldridge presented preliminary insights from stakeholder conversations undertaken to inform the Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan amendments, highlighting the following:
  - Watertrust Australia is supporting government decision making processes as an independent and impartial body, noting it does not have decision-making authority.
  - The Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan amendments were identified through the State Water Forum as a priority area, with the process recognised as highly contentious and influenced by fairness-related concerns.
  - K Aldridge noted that top-down processes can contribute to perceptions of unfairness and increase the risk of deadlock.
  - Structured conversations have been undertaken in the Bremer and Hindmarsh-Inman catchments to hear diverse perspectives on the problem, desired outcomes, community roles and the amendment process. Notes were shared with participants, and a synthesis report is being prepared.
  - Key messages included the importance of a fair, genuine and inclusive process; the need for science to be neutral, relevant and trusted; and the value of developing a shared understanding of the problem, desired outcomes and options. It was also noted that First Nations rights and compensation require careful consideration.
  - A high-level consensus was identified that there is a water crisis, based on lived experience, alongside general support for environmental protection while recognising there remains room for negotiation.

- Historical context was noted as an active constraint on community views. Compensation was identified as an important consideration, and strong and diverse views were expressed in relation to First Nations water rights, including the need for a long-term, collaborative and separate process.
- The presentation highlighted the need to separate matters that sit within the Water Allocation Plan from broader catchment and community issues, which may require parallel approaches such as catchment management, stormwater and land management planning, or other contribution mechanisms.
- Stakeholders expressed an appetite for more inclusive processes, with insights suggesting the need to be clear about which elements are open to community input and to establish a multi-layered governance process.
- It was noted that communities may mobilise if options are perceived as unfair, and that the scale of the challenge should not be underestimated. Taking time and remaining adaptive were identified as important considerations.
- Next steps include finalising the synthesis report, continuing discussions, and exploring opportunities to support the amendment process, including local-scale issue exploration to inform regional options, agreed outcomes, priority issues and processes such as WAPACs.
- K Aldridge reiterated that achieving community acceptance of scientific and policy outcomes requires investment in both technical science and relationship-building.

- Discussion followed:
  - The Board thanked K Aldridge for the presentation and discussed the importance of building trusted relationships between communities and those undertaking scientific work.
  - It was noted that community confidence is strengthened when people have the opportunity to engage directly with scientists, ask questions and participate in two-way conversations, rather than solely receiving information through presentations or reports.
  - K Aldridge advised that community concerns are often less about the science itself and more about trust, communication and relationships with the people producing and presenting the information.
  - The Board noted observations that organisations often invest substantial resources in technical and scientific work, while comparatively less effort is directed toward community engagement and relationship-building.
  - Board members discussed the relevance of these findings to the Board's work and the value of maintaining meaningful engagement with stakeholders, communities and land managers.

2.2 First Nations Artwork Procurement

- C Dorr presented to the Board on the First Nations Artwork Procurement process, highlighting that the project was approached as a partnership rather than a standard procurement process.
  - The process provided First Nations people with a genuine role in decision-making, strengthened relationships across the region, and resulted in artwork that will help tell the story of Country and caring for Country into the future.
  - The artwork was commissioned to support the new Regional Landscape Plan.
  - The assessment panel included key First Nations delegates from all three Nations, ensuring cultural authority was at the heart of the process.
  - Assessment criteria included story and meaning, connection to Country, cultural integrity, understanding of caring for Country, collaboration and communication, and capacity to deliver the commission. The panel agreed to offer the opportunity to an emerging artist.
  - Jamaya Branson, a Ngarrindjeri artist, was selected as the successful artist. The panel identified her strong connection to Country, deep respect for Elders and culture, alignment with caring for Country, openness to collaboration and compelling artistic vision. The artwork represents the Board's five priorities, with a central meeting place symbolising community connection.
  - The project has created a lasting visual identity for the Regional Landscape Plan, strengthened relationships with First Nations communities, demonstrated shared decision-making in practice, and established a model that other landscape boards are seeking to learn from.
  - The final project cost, including remuneration for panel members, was $10,400.

- Discussion followed:
  - The Chair acknowledged Jamaya's work and the significance of the artwork for the Board.
  - S Day acknowledged the considered way in which C Dorr led the process, noting the opportunity for all involved to learn together.

2.3 General Manager's Report

- M Garrod thanked B Della Torre for acting in the General Manager's role while he was on leave, B Della Torre spoke to the paper provided, highlighting:
  - It was noted that the Australian Research Council has announced $660,000 in funding through Round 2 of the Linkage Projects Scheme for a three-year project. The project will be led by La Trobe University in partnership with HFLB, Flinders University and DEW, and will help define environmental water requirements for Fleurieu Peninsula swamps as a critical component of the Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan amendment process. HFLB will provide in-kind contributions valued at $230,000 over three years.
  - The 2025–26 Rabbit Bait Distribution Program has concluded, with the MERI team completing a program review. The review found that 45% of participants reported a reduction in rabbit sightings. Participation was significantly lower this year, with feedback indicating that some landholders had observed fewer rabbits, others questioned the value of baiting where neighbouring properties were not participating, and some had undertaken alternative control methods. Further analysis will be provided in the next General Manager's Report.
  - Recent aerial deer control resulted in 235 feral deer and 13 goats being removed, with staff noting the program is having a meaningful impact.
  - An update was provided on H5 bird flu, noting that the situation had changed since the report was circulated and a case had been detected in South Australia. An online forum was scheduled for later that day, with a synopsis to be provided to Board members following the meeting.
  - The Coastal Action Plan was launched and released on 9 June, with strong attendance noted.
  - The PPSA meeting on the Net Zero Strategy was discussed, with S Day, J Stacey and D Greenhough thanked for attending the workshop. It was noted that concerns were raised regarding the agency's use of ACCUs. The agency sought Crown Solicitor's Office advice, which confirmed the approach is appropriate as the agency is not trading for a commercial purpose and the ACCUs are being used as an offset. A response letter will be sent to the participant, providing the advice and thanking them for raising the matter.
  - The upcoming Ministerial tour was noted, with a snapshot of the itinerary provided and briefly discussed. The Board agreed that distribution of the full itinerary would be helpful, and that confirmation of Board member attendance should be sought as soon as possible.
- Discussion followed:
  - A Lowe queried whether PIRSA is also preparing for Polyphagous shot-hole borer, in addition to its response to H5 bird flu.
  - J Harvey queried current kangaroo numbers in the region. Staff advised that the most recent DEW Mount Lofty Ranges aerial count estimated approximately 70,000 kangaroos. Staff noted the limitations of the current management framework, including the separate processes for sustainable harvest and destruction permits, and advised that the Board has invested in improved surveys to strengthen regional population estimates.
  - It was noted that increased kangaroo management is required to reduce environmental impacts, while also considering social licence, recent FOI requests and community concerns. Staff noted that future changes through the Biodiversity Act may provide an opportunity to better align current management processes.
  - D Greenhough noted interest in attending the Water Catchment Conversation events. Board members who are also interested in attending were encouraged to discuss this with M Heinson.
  - S Day queried who was facilitating the First Nations training associated with the Back from the Brink native fish education program. C Dorr confirmed that ranger teams are undertaking upskilling and capacity building, with facilitation by T Daniell, Freshwater Ecologist, and M Turner, First Nations Partnerships Officer.

Action
2) Synthesis of Bird Flu update from PIRSA to be sent to Board members.

Responsible Officer: M Garrod

Action
3) Circulate the Ministerial visit itinerary to Board members and request confirmation of attendance.

Responsible Officer: E Heinrich

Action

4) The EDM for the Water Catchment Conversation events is to be re-sent to Board members.

Responsible Officer: *E Heinrich*

The board:

2.3.1 noted the General Manager's report.

Moved: *J Harvey* ***Seconded:*** *L Muffet* ***Carried***

2.4 Grassroots Grants Recommended Projects 2026-2027

- C Dorr spoke to the recommended Grassroots Grants projects for 2026–2027, highlighting the following:
  - The grant round was oversubscribed, with 71 applications received and a total funding request of $700,000. Of these, nine applications were assessed as ineligible and 21 did not progress beyond technical assessment.
  - A three staff panel completed the technical assessment and initial shortlisting. The shortlisted applications were then assessed by an assessment panel comprising of Community Engagement Committee members, resulting in 32 projects being recommended and the full $270,000 budget being allocated.
  - C Dorr noted that some applications included corporate administration costs. This will be addressed in the criteria for the next Grassroots Grants round, noting the guideline allows up to 10% for administration costs.
- Discussion followed:
  - J Harvey queried applicant engagement prior to submission. C Dorr confirmed that applicants are required to engage with the Board and the relevant stewardship officer before submitting an application, which has contributed to improved application quality.
  - The Board discussed opportunities to evaluate longer-term biodiversity outcomes resulting from grant funding. It was noted that funded projects are mapped within LOIS, creating opportunities to analyse outcomes over time and support future evaluation.
  - A Lowe queried the total co-contribution associated with the recommended projects. Staff took the matter on notice.

Action

5) Confirm the Grassroots Grants co-contribution amount and circulate to Board members.

Responsible Officer: *E Heinrich*

The board:

2.4.1 endorsed the list of projects recommended for funding for the 2026-27 round of Grassroots Grants, as presented in Attachments 1 and 2, to a total value of $270,000.

Moved: *J Harvey* ***Seconded:*** S Day ***Carried***

2.5 Board Training Matrix

- R Clark spoke to the paper, noting the development of the Board Member Skills and Capabilities Survey.
  - The self-paced survey is based on questions and skill areas captured by Landscape Services during the recruitment process and incorporates relevant elements from the Green Adelaide Board Matrix.
- Discussion followed:
  - D Greenhough noted that while the Board may provide advice on future capability needs, appointments remain a matter for the Minister. It was suggested that references to succession planning be reframed as contingency planning.
  - L Muffet queried the preferred completion timeframe, with staff confirming an indicative timeframe of approximately two weeks.
  - M Garrod queried whether the survey could be extended to external committee members. R Clark confirmed this would be possible, with Board members noting it may also support capability development among youth community members.

Action

6) Once circulated, the Board Matrix survey is to be extended to external Risk and Performance Committee and Community Engagement Committee members.

Responsible Officer: *R Clark*

The board:

2.5.1 noted the development of the Board Member Skills and Capabilities Survey and that the survey will be distributed to Board members in June 2026.

Moved: *L Muffet* ***Seconded:*** *J Klein* ***Carried***

2.6 MERI Framework

- A Skinner presented the MERI Framework, outlining how it will support monitoring, evaluation and reporting against delivery of the Regional Landscape Plan.
  - The framework sets out how the Board will measure progress against the outcomes and goals of the Regional Landscape Plan.
  - Long-term regional landscape health indicators will be used to assess the Plan's impact over time.
  - The framework will support transparency and accountability by demonstrating the Board's progress and outcomes to the community.
  - LHF will monitor and evaluate actions and achievements through quarterly and annual reporting processes.
  - D Ball provided a practical example of how the framework will be applied.
- Discussion followed:
  - D Greenhough confirmed that the Regional Landscape Plan had been signed by the Minister.
  - L Muffet commended the stronger logical linkages within the framework.

The board:

2.6.1 noted the LHF MERI Framework.

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

2.7 Declared Plant Review – Wilding Radiata Pine and African Lovegrass

- B Della Torre spoke to the paper provided prior to the meeting, outlining the outcomes of the declared plant review for wilding Radiata Pine and African Lovegrass.
  - The review considered the proposed declaration status for both species, including the implications for regional pest plant management and landholder responsibilities.
  - It was noted that the Board's role is to endorse a recommended position, with PIRSA responsible for making the final declaration decision.
  - The proposed stronger declaration for African Lovegrass was discussed, including the increased expectation for landholders to undertake control and destruction activities.
- Discussion followed:
  - L Muffet noted the need to consider tensions associated with Radiata Pine, including its amenity value and use in some settings, alongside its impacts as a wilding pest plant.

The board, in block:

2.7.1 endorsed supporting a declaration under section 192(3) of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 for wilding Radiata pine.

2.7.2 endorsed supporting a section 192(1) destruction declaration under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 for African lovegrass.

Moved: *A Graham* ***Seconded:*** *J Harvey* ***Carried***

2.8 Compliance Update

- B Ibbotson presented an update on the Compliance Program, including recent key cases, outcomes and the findings of the Compliance Review.
  - An update was provided on the change detection pilot program in the Tod River catchment in Eyre Peninsula, noting a report will be provided to the agency shortly.
  - The education component has contributed to a downturn in new cases, with the success of the associated social media campaign highlighted.
  - Internal and external teams were surveyed on the program. Key themes included communication, collaboration, processes and role clarity, with communication scoring highly both internally and externally. Role clarity scored slightly lower internally and has since been addressed.

  - Overall feedback on the program was positive.
  - Key learnings included the importance of data capture, collaboration, and establishing clear processes, scope and governance arrangements early.

- Discussion followed:
  - A Lowe queried how many of the 400 illegal dams originally detected had been resolved. B Ibbotson advised that 25 dams had been removed and 80 had been investigated, with approximately 250 dams currently under investigation. A Lowe also queried whether this data could be captured in MERI reporting, and staff agreed this should be included.
  - M Garrod thanked B Ibbotson for his work as Program Manager and acknowledged the media campaign and the resulting shift in community awareness.

The board:
2.8.1 noted the Hills and Fleurieu compliance update.

Moved: *J Harvey* ***Seconded:*** *J Stacey* ***Carried***

Standing Items

3.1 **Financial Overview**

- The financial overview was taken as read. Discussion followed:
  - S Day noted the importance of the Board reviewing the financial statements before they are included in the Annual Report and formally signed off. M Garrod confirmed this will be considered this year, and that if the timing does not align with a scheduled meeting, the Board will review the statements out of session.
  - J Klein queried what was meant by “support” in the priority breakdown. Staff confirmed it refers to enabling functions, including corporate services, administration and Board-related costs. It was agreed the wording will be updated in future reporting.

Action
7) Wording for “support” in priority breakdown to be updated.

Responsible Officer: *R Clark*

The board:
3.1.1 noted the Finance update as at 31 May 2026.

Moved: *J Harvey* ***Seconded:*** *C West* ***Carried***

3.2 **Board Forward Agenda**
The Board Forward Agenda was taken as read.

The board:
3.2.1 noted the Forward Agenda.

Carried

Other Business

4.1
- Watertrust relationship
  - M Garrod expressed appreciation that Watertrust is available as a resource and noted the value of its work with the community.
  - Staff noted that they believe the organisation has been received well by the community.
  - The board is exploring future and opportunities with Watertrust Australia.

- The Board noted the addition of the three key points at the beginning of each presentation and found the addition very helpful.

Carried

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

Meeting Closure

6.1 **Next meeting**: Wednesday – 26 August 2026
Venue: Mt Barker Community Centre – Training Room

6.2 **Meeting close** – 1:32pm

Endorsed	David Greenhough **Presiding Member** **Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board** 26 August 2026