

Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board

Business Plan 2026–2027

*Working together to care for
land, water and nature*

Acknowledgement of Watta / Ruwe / Yerta (Country)

The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board acknowledges First Nations 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 Watta/Ruwe/Yerta 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.

Artwork Story Jamaya Branson

This artwork represents the five priorities of the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board.

At the centre is a meeting place that holds the **Community** together. The same colour of the people is used in the sections between each element that represents the community working on Country.

The bottom left holds the **Nature**, using the eucalyptus leaves over light and darker brown dots that show different shades of the trees which they grow on.

The bottom right holds the bird's-eye view of the **Land**, with various colours of the landscape and meeting places within our community.

The top left represents **Water** - our many water ways, rivers, lakes, creeks, oceans and streams, all connected throughout our Ruwe (Country) and a vital life source for our peoples and animals.

The top right represents **Climate**. The sun, rainfall, storms and clouds. The sun is another important cultural component – helping us and our land thrive and grow.

Each brush stroke and line work holds an important meaning and brings together all five priorities.

Foreword



I am pleased to present the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board Business Plan for 2026/27. This document outlines our budget, programs, and key activities for the year ahead.

We are excited to build on the foundations of the previous Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Plan and begin delivering on the ambitions of the new Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-31. The past five years have seen remarkable achievements - strengthened partnerships with First Nations, improved habitat and biodiversity outcomes, and practical, on-ground action that has enhanced the health and resilience of our landscapes. These successes provide a springboard as we turn our focus to the next five years.

In 2026/27, the first year of our new Regional Landscape Plan, we will focus on delivering real change and ensuring our collective efforts are at a scale that can meet the challenges ahead.

This Business Plan outlines how we will continue to support community-led stewardship, expand climate-smart farm initiatives, deliver targeted conservation for threatened species, and manage priority pests and weeds, while fostering collaboration, learning and cultural engagement across our region.

With the dedication of our Board, staff, volunteers, landholders, and partners, we are well placed to deliver practical outcomes and measurable progress across the region in 2026/27.

Together, we will continue to care for the Hills and Fleurieu, supporting sustainable, biodiverse, and productive landscapes.

David Greenhough
Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board Chair

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What we've achieved

Over the past five years, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board has worked alongside communities, land managers, First Nations partners, councils, industry and government to deliver the first Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2021-26. That plan set a clear direction for caring for land, water and nature in a region facing increasing pressure from climate change, biodiversity loss, water stress and growing demands on land and resources.

Meaningful progress has been made through collaboration, stewardship and targeted investment. Land managers across the region have worked to reduce the impact of pest plants and animals, build soil health, protect and restore native vegetation, and improve the way water is managed and shared. Community groups and volunteers have contributed thousands of hours to on-ground action, while partnerships with First Nations people have continued to grow, embedding cultural knowledge and connection to Country into landscape management.

Since its inception, the Board has delivered over \$1.25 million in Grassroots Grants for community-led projects and \$1.4 million in bushfire recovery grants for fire-affected landholders.

Together, these efforts demonstrate the value of coordinated, regionwide action and the strength of whole of community stewardship.

This Business Plan builds directly on that foundation. It represents the first year of delivery under the new Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-31, a plan that recognises the next five years as pivotal for the region.

Key achievements of the last five years include:

- 1,500 land managers with improved knowledge and skills through the delivery of more than 125 events;
- Reduction in weed impacts through strategic planning with regional stakeholders, development of the Hills and Fleurieu Pest Plant and Animal Strategy and district roadside weed management plans, and control of priority species along 1,300km of roadsides and 3,200 ha of other land;
- Increase in land managers' capacity to control pests, including up to 650 properties engaged in rabbit control annually;
- Eradication of four feral goat populations in the region, with effective eradication of remaining populations now in reach.
- Reduction in feral deer impacts, with removal of around 7,000 animals;
- The Review of the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plans, informing proposed future plan amendments;
- Risks to waterways reduced through the assessment of more than 230 Water Affecting Activity permits;
- Improved outcomes for over 20 threatened native species, through restoration of 850 hectares of habitat, planting of 12,500 paddock trees, protection of critical breeding sites and targeted seed-banking, assisted breeding and translocation programs, and the development of the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board Action Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities 2026-2040;
- Improved capacity to prepare and respond to future extreme weather events through the development of the Hills and Fleurieu region land, water and nature emergency preparedness, response and recovery plan.

Meet your board

David Greenhough, Chair

David is a keen environmentalist and has been chair of the board since its inception in 2020. David also worked with the Department for Environment and Water, partnership members and the community to provide advice and guidance in the creation of the Glenthorne National Park.

Sarah Day

Sarah is a sustainable agriculture strategist helping organisations rethink land management. With a background in law, she has supported farmers, processors, retailers, and investors in understanding and implementing sustainable practices. Sarah has worked in consulting and in house roles and served on various boards, offering strategic, pragmatic solutions.

Amelia Graham

Amelia manages her family's property in Hindmarsh Valley, producing organic beef and lamb. Passionate about sustainable food production, soil health, and revegetation, she also values native food and Ngarrindjeri culture. With a Masters in Environmental Management, Amelia has over 10 years of experience in environmental education and community engagement.

Jock Harvey

Jock is a fifth-generation farmer and has been involved in numerous aspects of viticulture and winemaking around the world. As the co-founder of Biodiversity McLaren Vale, Jock believes that tree planting is an inclusive and effective way to improve the visual landscape.

Janet Klein

Janet is a viticulturist and conservationist who has dedicated 20 years to sustainable wine growing and landscape regeneration. She co-founded Ngeringa Vineyards, one of Australia's first certified biodynamic vineyards. Janet has recently investigated microplastics along the South Australian coastline.

Professor Andy Lowe

Andy is an expert in biodiversity and forests. He has discovered lost forests, championed the elimination of illegally logged timber in global supply chains, and is lead author of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - Land Degradation and Restoration report.

Leanne Muffet

As an experienced board member, Leanne brings expertise in strategic planning, facilitation, governance, business development and project management to the board. With qualifications in social sciences, business sustainability, leadership and as a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Leanne is committed to long-term integrated landscape outcomes.

James Stacey

James is a farmer and director of Bremer River Fodder, managing dryland and irrigated crops in the Fleurieu and Murraylands regions. A Nuffield Scholar, he studied urban growth's impact on agriculture globally. James is involved in water allocation planning and leads revegetation projects to protect natural resources.

Dr Chris West

Chris trained as a veterinary surgeon and has led large NGO, conservation-directed and science-based zoological societies in both Adelaide and the UK. He has been involved with many initiatives to support endangered species, landscape-level ecological management, research and public engagement.



Board members L-R - Professor Andy Lowe, Janet Klein, Leanne Muffet, Sarah Day, Amelia Graham, David Greenhough (Chair), James Stacey, Dr Chris West, Jock Harvey.

The board is a regional facilitator, catalyst and partnership builder.

This means we support and align the great work being done, foster and grow local capacity, and help share knowledge between stakeholders.

The board is a statutory body established under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* tasked with helping manage the region's landscapes and natural resources. The board's obligations include reviewing water allocation plans, issuing Water Affecting Activities permits, supporting landholders to sustainably manage land, declared pest plants and animals and impact-causing native species, and engaging the community in landscape management.

The board raises landscape and water levies to deliver its obligations and programs that contribute to the priorities of the Regional Landscape Plan. The levies also help the board attract additional funding and support to increase what is achieved in our region.

Vision

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



Regional priorities for landscape management

The 5-year Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-31 sets out the priorities for landscape management in the region, providing a roadmap for collective action.

The plan calls for an integrated regional approach to landscape management and articulates five priorities in the areas of Community, Climate, Land, Water and Nature. The priorities, objectives and strategies identified in the plan reflect the values and concerns of the region's community and where effort and investment is needed.

Priorities	Objectives
 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 primary production
	L3 Reduce the adverse impacts of weeds
	L4 Reduce the adverse impacts 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

Sources of funding

Table 1: Sources of revenue and other funding in 2026-27

Funding source	2026-27(\$)
Landscape and water levies¹	
Regional landscape levy	6,319,821
Water levy	2,855,537
External funding	
Australian Government: National Landcare Program Regional Delivery Partners	1,078,173
State Government: Clean Rivers	1,500,000
Landscape Priorities Fund: Statewide Unauthorised Dams Compliance	1,200,000
Landscape Priorities Fund: Fire recovery	115,360
Landscape Priorities Fund: Now or Never – controlling feral deer and goats	163,787
Green Adelaide: Feral deer and feral goat eradication programs ²	250,000
MOAA Limestone Coast Landscape Board: National Soil Monitoring Program ²	35,853
Interest	145,000
TOTAL REVENUE	13,663,531
Carry-over funding from previous years ³	569,136
TOTAL FUNDING	14,233,000

¹ Landscape levy income and water levy rates as approved by the board in December (2.4% actual CPI rate (September 2025 quarter, Adelaide) increase on 2025-26).

² Landscape boards collaborate on the delivery of some programs and services across regions. These arrangements are formalised by Service Level Agreements or Memorandum of Administrative Agreements.

³ Anticipated and approved carry-over of expenditure authority of levy and external funding from prior years.

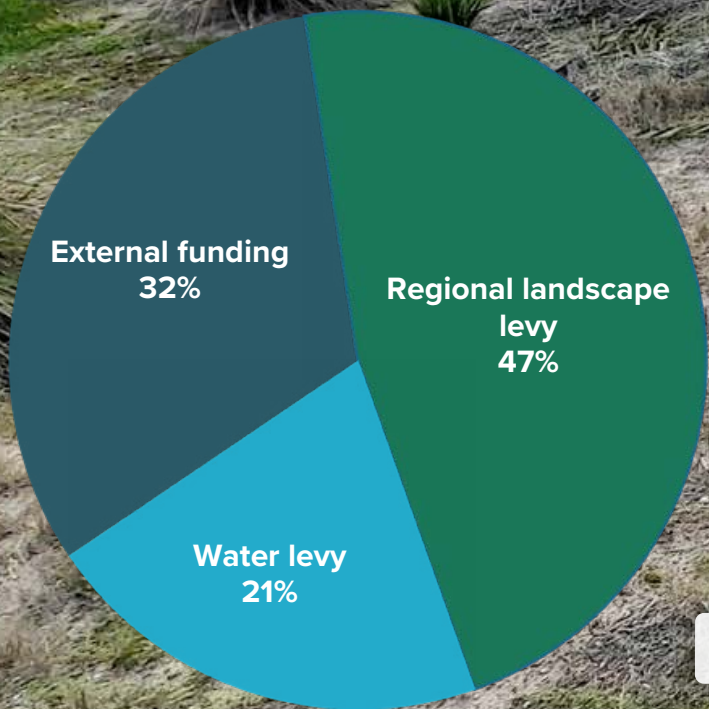


Figure 1. Funding by source

Program investment

The board invests funding from the levies and other sources into delivering activities against the five priorities of the Regional Landscape Plan.

The following tables provide the anticipated expenditure against each priority, and Tables 3A-E also indicate the Plan objectives that will be addressed by projects.

Table 2 Expenditure by priorities and funding source in 2026-27.

Priority	Landscape and water levies (\$)	External funding (\$)	Total (\$)
Community	1,682,000	316,300	1,998,300
Climate	511,900	326,400	838,300
Land	1,676,900	655,900	2,332,800
Water	4,465,000	2,700,000	7,165,000
Nature	1,494,100	404,200	1,898,300
Total expenditure	9,829,700	4,402,800	14,233,000

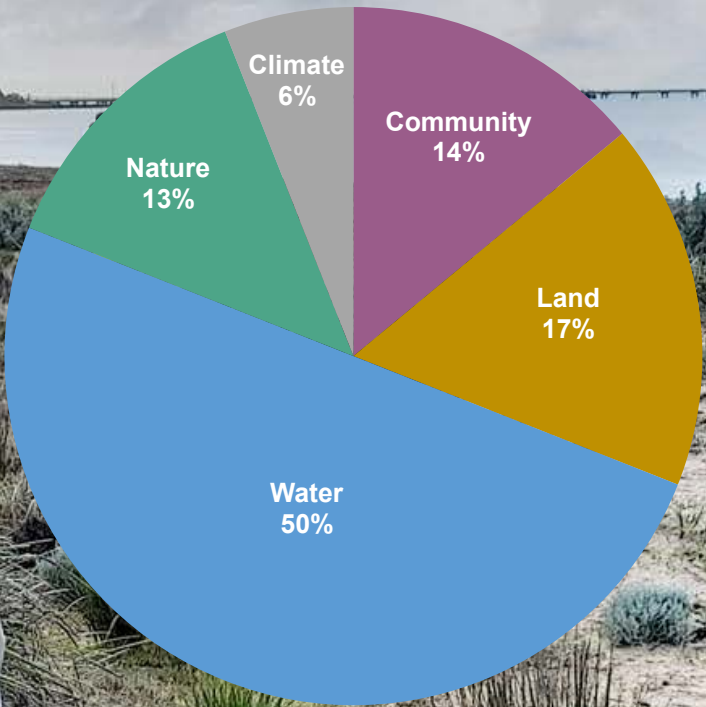


Figure 2. Expenditure by priority.

Note that climate investment relates to projects where the primary objective is climate adaptation and/or mitigation.

Overall investment into climate outcomes

Climate outcomes are delivered through our investment into land, water and nature priorities, not just climate-specific projects.

Across all priority areas:

- **57%** of our investment supports climate adaptation
- **2%** of our investment supports climate mitigation
- **17%** of our investment supports both climate adaptation and mitigation

Stewardship program

Supporting land managers to be the best stewards they can be - embracing their role in caring for land, water and nature.

Healthy soils, watercourses and native vegetation are critical assets that underpin sustainable production and the region's biodiversity. Across the region, responsibility for these assets is shared by a diverse group of land managers, including large-scale primary producers, small acreage private landholders, state and local government agencies managing public land, First Nations, volunteers and non-government organisations.

The Stewardship Program supports these land managers with practical, on-ground advice and assistance to care for land, water and nature. When actions taken on individual properties are repeated by all land managers, they combine to deliver lasting improvements in soil health, water quality, biodiversity and landscape resilience.

Our Stewardship Program connects rural land managers with five ways to care for land, water and nature:



1 Understand land manager responsibilities

- Understand legislative responsibilities under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*, including pest plant and animal control, water affecting activities and managing soils.
- Connect with other legislation, including the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*, *South Australian Country Fires Act 1989*, *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.



2 Create a plan for managing natural assets

- Prepare an action plan to care for land, water and nature.
- Connect with service providers including contractors, local businesses and community groups.
- Connect to First Nations heritage and knowledge, and creating opportunities for Kaurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri people to access private land.



3 Care for native vegetation and undertake revegetation

- Improve the condition of existing native vegetation.
- Carry out successful revegetation.



4 Care for watercourses, wetlands and dams

- Improve the health of watercourses and wetlands.
- Manage and maintain dams for production and environmental benefits.



5 Care for soils

- Improve the condition and resilience of soils.
- Monitor and manage soils for production and landscape health.



Community

Table 3A

Projects	Contributing to Landscape Plan Objectives	Levy funded expenditure (\$)	Externally funded expenditure (\$)
Raising community awareness	P1	463,859	
Statewide services	P1	35,000	
Regional capacity services	P1, P2		316,336
First nations partnerships project	P2	180,763	
Regional dialogues and partnerships	P1, P2	110,326	
Engaging community and volunteers	P1	320,100	
Grassroots Grants and Greensafe Grants	P1	270,000	
Citizen science and understanding landscape condition	P1	104,219	
Program support		199,770	

Supporting First Nations projects and partnerships

We continue to place great importance on our relationships with the Kurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri Nations, working alongside communities to care for Country and uphold culture. We engage through Prescribed Body Corporates, recognised governance structures, and other trusted cultural voices.

We strengthen our understanding by learning directly from First Nations peoples and growing our capability to engage respectfully on matters that impact Country and community. This includes providing cultural awareness training for our staff and supporting landholders and volunteers through workshops led by First Nations practitioners.

In 2026/27, we will contribute to self-determination efforts, including Kurna's Healthy Country Planning, the expansion of the Ngarrindjeri Ranger Program, and facilitating access to Country and cultural heritage on private land for Peramangk representatives.

Our work supports culturally safe opportunities for people to reconnect with Country, while creating pathways for employment and increasing procurement from Aboriginal-owned businesses.



Grassroots and GreenSafe Grants

In 2026/27, we will continue to strengthen community-led action through our Grassroots Grants program. In 2025/26, we allocated \$270,000 to support around 30 local environmental projects, and will support recipients to bring their projects to life this year. These grants help volunteers, community groups, and land stewards deliver practical, on-ground work that protects biodiversity, improves soil and water health, and builds resilience to a changing climate. They also support our broader Stewardship Program, enabling more people to actively care for and improve the health of their natural assets.

In total, our Hills and Fleurieu Grassroots Grants program has invested more than \$1.25 million in community-driven environmental and primary production projects since its inception, supporting almost 150 initiatives across the region.

Our GreenSafe Grants program continues alongside this, offering up to \$500 to schools and community environmental groups for essential equipment, such as personal protective gear and small tools, helping keep volunteers safe and supported in their stewardship activities.





Climate

Table 3B

Projects	Contributing to Landscape Plan Objectives	Levy funded expenditure (\$)	Externally funded expenditure (\$)
Organisational transition to operational net zero emissions	C1	49,425	
Climate Smart Farm Action Planning	C1, C2, L2		211,043
Climate readiness of industries and communities	C1, C2, L2	285,715	
Fire recovery	C2, L1, L3, L4, L5	71,571	115,360
Program support		105,144	

The projects listed above under the climate priority are specifically targeted at addressing climate impacts. It is important to note that most of the board’s work contributes to building landscape resilience to climate change.

Investment (\$) across all priority areas contributing to climate mitigation, adaptation or both.

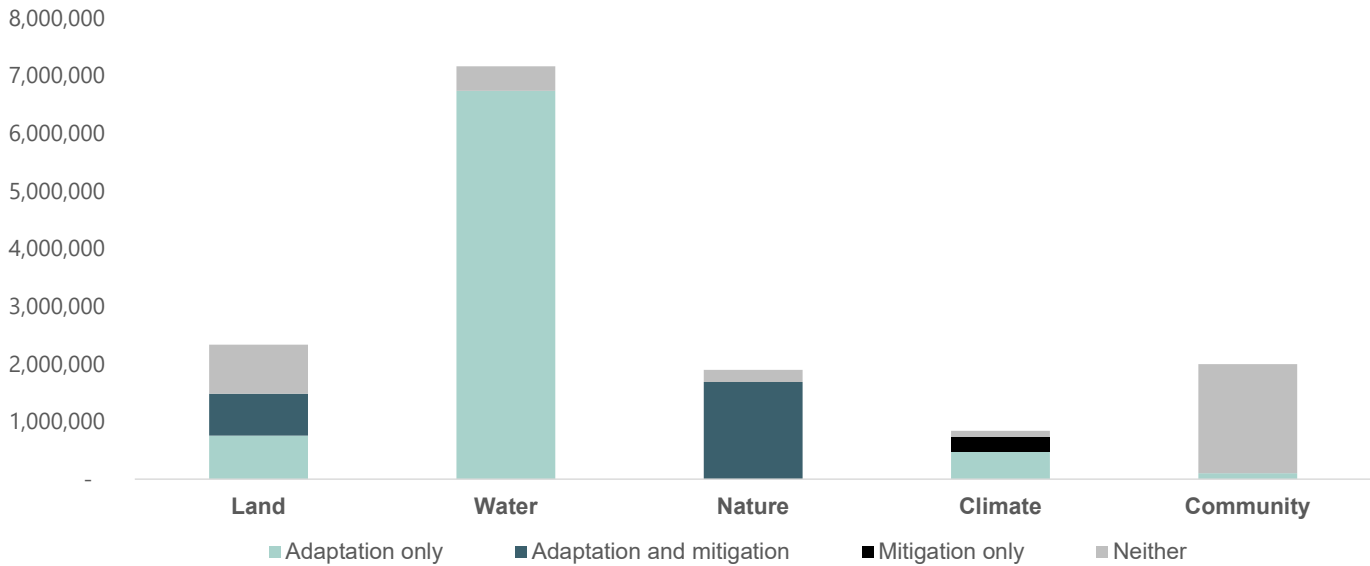


Figure 3



Climate Smart Farm Action Planning

We are delivering a practical and inspiring series of workshops designed to help land managers build skills in climate resilience, soil health, native vegetation, water management, weed control, and whole property planning. These workshops are central to our Stewardship Program, helping landholders take practical steps to care for natural assets across their properties.

To support hands-on learning, we have purchased two Optiweigh mobile livestock weighing units for farmers to borrow and trial on their own properties. This gives producers the chance to experience ag tech in action and make timely, data-driven decisions. By growing knowledge and increasing confidence in using ag tech, farmers lift productivity while also reducing emissions, benefitting both farm profitability and the environment. We look forward to growing this program in 2026/27.

This project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.



Recovering from bushfire

In 2026/27, we continue coordinated recovery efforts following the Deep Creek and Tooperang-Nangkita fires, focusing on supporting affected landscapes and communities. Early intervention included stabilising priority sites by repairing damaged fencing, managing grazing pressure from deer, goats, and kangaroos, assessing and treating rapid weed growth, and carrying out initial flora, fauna, and water quality checks.

Through our Stewardship Program, we will continue to work closely with fire-affected landholders, providing practical advice and support to manage immediate post-fire impacts. As part of this, we deliver targeted stewardship grants through the State Government’s Landscape Priorities Fund to assist landholders with weed control, pest animal management, maintaining groundcover to reduce erosion risk, and supporting native vegetation recovery in priority areas.

We also undertake targeted surveys of high priority threatened species to understand their post-fire condition and establish baselines for long-term monitoring. These assessments guide our future restoration and management decisions.

This staged recovery program strengthens the resilience of impacted landscapes and communities.





Resilient Hills and Coasts partnership

Through the Resilient Hills and Coasts (RHC) Regional Climate Action Plan 2025-2030, we commit to accelerating climate action, reducing emissions while strengthening our region's ability to adapt to a changing climate.

We collaborate with RHC partners to build capacity, influence policy, and deliver impactful, cross-regional projects that strengthen resilient, biodiverse landscapes, support climate-ready housing and community resilience, manage climate risks, and share our regional story.

The partnership brings together Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Kangaroo Island, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor, and Yankalilla Councils, RDA Adelaide Hills Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Kangaroo Island and Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Boards, and the Department for Environment and Water.



Operating under Net Zero

Our 2024/25 carbon audit gave us a clearer picture of our current emissions, thanks to better data and more detailed reporting. Our main sources of emissions are fleet fuel use, office equipment and supplies, waste, cleaning services, and impacts from working at home. In 2025/26 the board reached a significant milestone, achieving net zero emissions for Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu's operations to date through the purchases of accredited carbon offsets.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, the focus shifts to reducing overall operational emissions and maintaining net zero status. We see transitioning our fleet as our biggest opportunity. As suitable electric and hybrid vehicles become available for on-ground work, we will move to a staged replacement approach. We will also focus on more sustainable purchasing choices and continue to improve the quality of our data.

Annual reporting helps us stay transparent, make informed decisions, and track our progress as we strive to maintain carbon neutrality from 2026 onwards.



Land

Table 3C

Projects	Contributing to Landscape Plan Objectives	Levy funded expenditure (\$)	Externally funded expenditure (\$)
Stewardship – supporting pest management, land management and sustainable production	L1, L2, L3, L4, L5	514,588	
Roadside and priority weeds	L3	374,521	40,000
Coordination of compliance activities	L1, L3, L4	205,878	
Controlling feral deer, goats and impact-causing native animals	L4	314,025	413,787
Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator	L1, L2, C1, C2		166,256
National soil monitoring program	L1		35,853
Program support ¹		267,866	

¹ Included in the 'Program Support' for each priority are board and committee expenses, monitoring and business running costs.

Eradication of feral goats

In 2026/27, we continue working towards the feasible eradication of feral goats in priority parts of the Hills and Fleurieu region. Recent control efforts have dramatically reduced goat numbers, and the landscape is already showing signs of recovery.

We build on this momentum using a combination of aerial and ground-based operations to locate and remove remaining animals, supported by strong collaboration with landholders and partner agencies. Community reporting through FeralScan remains essential, helping us track small, hard-to-detect groups.

Alongside this, we support landholders through our Stewardship Program, providing practical guidance to manage unconfined stock and improve property infrastructure such as fencing (pictured). Strengthening containment practices prevents escapes, protects native vegetation, soils, and waterways, and limits the spread of weeds across priority landscapes.



Feral deer and western grey kangaroo management

In 2026/27, we continue large-scale feral deer control across the region, including Adelaide's fringes. Early intervention remains essential, as deer cause significant environmental, agricultural, and road safety impacts if left unchecked.

Building on the removal of more than 7,580 feral deer from the region, including over 2,400 and strong landholder engagement across the peri-urban fringe, we expand coordinated ground and aerial operations to prevent population growth and protect high-value landscapes.

This program is delivered in partnership with neighbouring landscape boards and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) and is funded by the Landscape Levy and the Landscape Priorities Fund through the 'Now or Never - controlling feral deer and goats' project.

We also continue targeted management of western grey kangaroos in priority areas. Kangaroo numbers have increased due to fragmented habitats, abundant pasture, and the availability of artificial water points, leading to high grazing pressure, competition with native wildlife, and declining vegetation condition. By reducing grazing impacts from both deer and kangaroos, and encouraging community reporting of feral deer, we help protect native species, farmland, and community safety while strengthening overall landscape resilience.



Working together to control declared weeds on roadsides

Our region contains more than 5,000 kilometres of roads and over 10,000 kilometres of roadsides, with suitable habitat for more than 150 declared weed species. We work closely with all six councils, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, and neighbouring landholders to co-design priority actions for roadside weed management across the network.

We aim to reduce weed spread while protecting biodiversity, supporting agriculture and biosecurity, and strengthening fire preparedness. We also engage adjacent landholders to encourage control of target weeds on their properties, maximising the long-term effectiveness of our program.





Water

Table 3D

Projects	Contributing to Landscape Plan Objectives	Levy funded expenditure (\$)	Externally funded expenditure (\$)
Stewardship – supporting land managers to care for dams and watercourses	W4	630,882	
Clean Rivers	W4		1,500,000
Water planning and implementation for McLaren Vale, Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges	W1	1,155,678	
Monitoring water resources	W1, W4	350,029	
State water planning and management costs ¹	W1	1,628,455	
Water compliance	W2	271,879	1,200,000
Program support		428,085	

¹ State Water Planning and Management contributions include the following functions: water licensing and assessment, water resource monitoring, state and condition reporting for water resources, compliance activities and water planning advice to support the management of water resources. These services are provided by the Department for Environment and Water, including departmental staff based regionally.

Engaging the community in water planning

In 2026/27, we progress amendments to the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plans, following the 2023/24 review which determined the plans are no longer fit for purpose. The amendment process integrates contemporary science with structured community engagement to support a resilient and sustainable water future. Detailed technical investigations address critical knowledge gaps, including climate change impacts. We continue to collaborate with Watertrust Australia to support early problem definition and options scoping, ensuring clarity around key challenges and potential management responses. A six-month series of Catchment Conversations provides transparent, locally focused forums to engage communities, First Nations, licence holders, industry,

and environmental stakeholders. These sessions surface lived experience, provide listening posts for perspectives on trade-offs, and build shared understanding of constraints and opportunities. Clear, consistent communication outlines the scope of proposed amendments, evidence sources, and intended outcomes. Feedback is documented and reported back, strengthening trust, supporting informed decision-making, and providing greater certainty for water users’ planning and investment.



Clean Rivers

This program is a new South Australian Government commitment to clean up and care for our rivers and waterways. It focuses on restoring degraded river and estuary areas by planting native vegetation, stabilising riverbanks, reducing erosion, and improving water quality. The work will take place in priority catchments where runoff from towns, farms and roads is affecting rivers and the ocean in Gulf St Vincent. Local communities, landholders, councils, First Nations groups, scientists and government agencies will work together to deliver practical, on ground actions that improve the health of waterways and increase the resilience of our landscapes.

Alongside on ground works, the program will help develop a long term framework for caring for rivers across South Australia. This includes using science to identify where action is most needed and exploring new ways to fund restoration into the future, so it doesn’t rely only on short term grants. The goal is to make it easier to keep investing in healthy rivers over time, while supporting local jobs, community involvement and care for Country. By starting with practical action now and planning for the long term, the project helps protect nature, strengthen communities and keep our rivers healthy for future generations.



Tackling illegal dams in the Mount Lofty Ranges

Illegal dams across the Mount Lofty Ranges threaten water security, farming productivity, and fragile ecosystems. Since the 2013 moratorium, high-resolution satellite imagery has revealed hundreds of new or enlarged dams intercepting vital water flows. These structures reduce water availability for downstream users and place native species such as the southern pygmy perch and mountain galaxias at risk. With climate change intensifying dry conditions, equitable and sustainable water management has never been more important.

We continue to deliver a proactive compliance and restoration program that combines education, enforcement, and innovation. We also support land managers to understand their legal responsibilities, provide clear pathways to obtain development approval or water-affecting activity permits, and use advanced satellite technology to rapidly detect landscape changes. Where required, we coordinate removal of illegal structures to restore natural flows.



Table 3E

Projects	Contributing to Landscape Plan Objectives	Levy funded expenditure (\$)	Externally funded expenditure (\$)
Stewardship – Supporting land managers to care for nature	N1, N2	888,778	
NHT Back from the Brink - Recovering threatened species	N3, C2	104,373	404,174
Supporting Fleurieu coasts and seas	N2	214,911	
ReBird the Ranges - Reversing the decline in Mount Lofty Ranges birds	N2, N3, C2	75,732	
Program support		210,287	

Bringing threatened species back from the brink

Our Back from the Brink project delivers targeted conservation actions to improve the long-term population prospects of four priority threatened species in the Hills and Fleurieu region.

In 2026/27, we will focus on seedling propagation, revegetation, and habitat restoration for the western beautiful firetail, a nationally endangered bird species. Population surveys and habitat restoration, including weed control and replanting of riparian vegetation, support the reintroduction of the southern bell frog to areas where it once occurred, while the Murray hardyhead is reintroduced at strategic locations to boost population numbers. Both programs involve active participation from First Nations groups and local schools.

We continue supporting volunteers in monitoring hooded plover populations and protecting key breeding sites, building on previous successes. These activities are delivered through collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, volunteers, community groups, schools, First Nations representatives, private

landholders, and contractors, ensuring a coordinated and effective conservation program over five years.

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

Sitting alongside Back from the Brink outcomes, the Hooded Plover Program works to increase breeding success across Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula, achieved through ongoing monitoring, protective infrastructure such as fencing and signage, and public education initiatives to raise awareness and encourage community support. The program is part of BirdLife Australia's national beach-nesting bird program and is supported regionally by Green Adelaide, Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu, local councils, and volunteers.



Action planning for threatened species and ecological communities

The recently developed Action Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities guides where Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu will focus its efforts to prevent the extinction of priority threatened species and ecological communities in our region. This strategic document supports the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Plan 2026-31, setting out investment priorities for funding and partnerships.

The region supports over 1,500 native plant species, 525 native animal species, and 56 vegetation communities, yet many are in steep decline, with 186 plant species, 158 animal species, and 13 ecological communities now officially listed as threatened.

The plan identifies major pressures including habitat loss, invasive species, altered fire regimes, water extraction, disease, and climate change impacts, and sets out priority actions to address them through targeted investment, on-ground management, research, and monitoring.

ReBird the Ranges

ReBird the Ranges is a long term initiative working with more than 20 organisations to reverse the decline of woodland birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges. In 2026/27, the focus will be on building a strong groundswell of community support for protecting existing habitat and planting new habitat across landscapes.

A key area of work is attracting funding and developing environmental markets that can support landholders to plant and manage habitat at scale.

In 2026/27, we will begin implementing the plan in collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, First Nations groups, private landholders, schools, and community organisations. Key activities include habitat restoration and revegetation, species monitoring and reintroductions, weed and pest management, and support for volunteers engaged in threatened species programs such as the Hooded Plover and Back from the Brink initiatives.



The program brings together First Nations, landholders, community groups, scientists and partners to take coordinated action and build hope for the recovery of woodland bird species.





About us

The board and its committees

The board consists of nine community members with a range of skills and knowledge, appointed by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. For more information about the board members, see the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board website at hf.landscape.sa.gov.au

In 2026-27, the board's operations are supported by the following committees:

- Risk and Performance Committee
- Water Resources Steering Committee
- Water Allocation Planning Advisory Committees for the Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges and Western Mt Lofty Ranges (to be established).
- Community Engagement Committee

Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu

Our organisation, which we refer to as 'Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu', implements programs and services on behalf of the board.

We are passionate about our unique role as connectors within the Hills and Fleurieu community - connecting people to knowledge, expertise and funding.

We walk together with First Nations people, landholders and the broader community to sustainably manage our biodiverse and productive landscapes.

Our General Manager employs the staff, who are public sector employees. In 2026-27, it is anticipated that there will be 53.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (44.1 FTE funded by levies and 9.6 FTE funded by external funding). The H&F levy-funded staff salaries and on-costs will cost \$5,753,708. These staff costs are apportioned to the projects that they will deliver.

Department for Environment and Water is contracted to provide Corporate Services support.

Planning framework

As shown below, both the work of the board delivered through the Business Plan, and the work of other organisations and community, contribute to achieving the Landscape Plan.

The Landscape Plan contributes to, and aligns with, the State Landscape Strategy and other state, national and international policies and agreements.

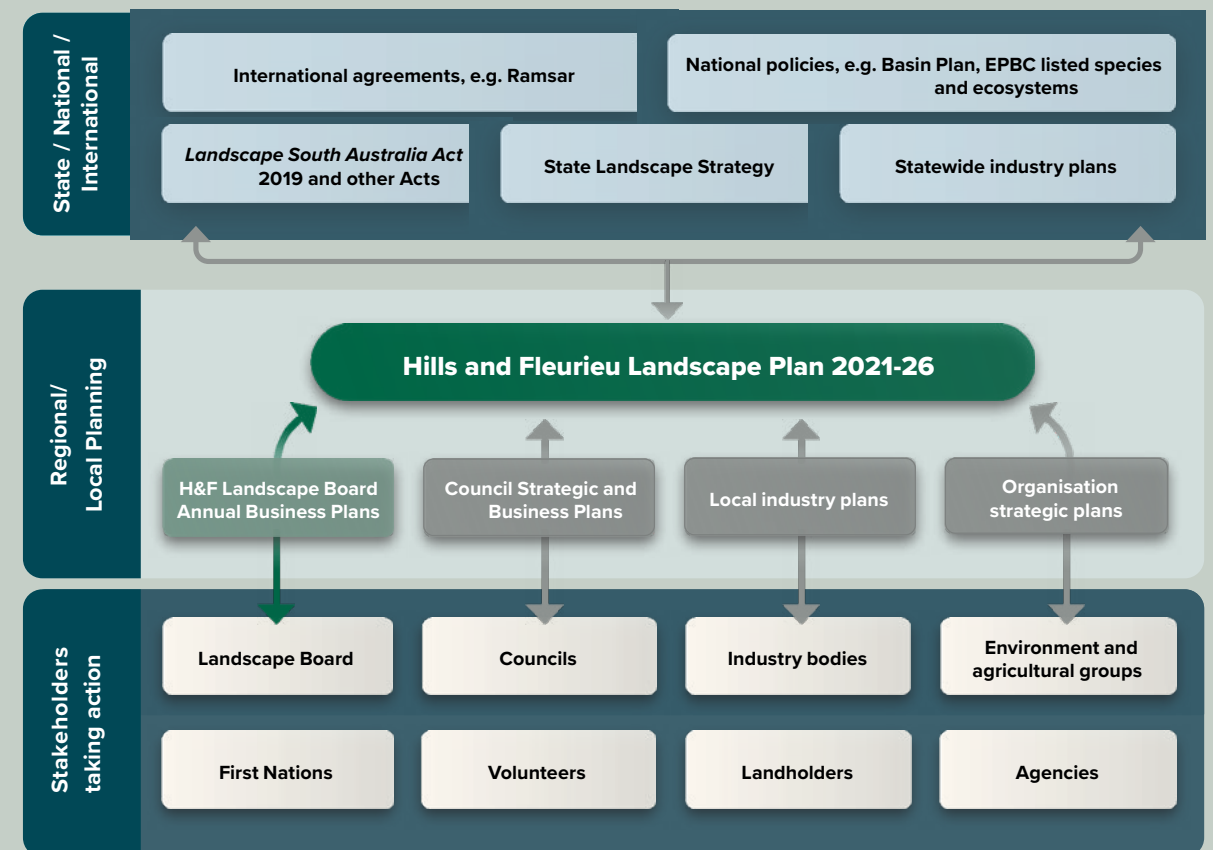


Figure 4: Planning Framework

Measuring landscape condition and progress

The programs and projects outlined in this business plan show the board's contribution to the Hills and Fleurieu Regional Landscape Plan 2026-2031.

The figure on the next page shows a theory of change, that summarises how the board's programs aim to influence landscape health. The board's approach to monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI), and the indicators used to monitor progress against the plan are outlined in its MERI Framework.

The board monitors, evaluates and reports on the progress and impact of its programs, including:

- quarterly reporting on project status and activities delivered (performance reporting)
- producing an achievements report and a statutory annual report showing how the levy funds have been spent in the financial year and what has been achieved;
- program level monitoring to evaluate impact and inform management decisions; and
- a mid-term evaluation of the Landscape Plan 2026-2031 to understand how the plan's implementation has influenced the condition of the region's landscapes and inform future strategic planning.



Figure 5: How the board effects change across landscape plan priorities, and the 'triple-loop learning' approach to monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement across short-term delivery, and strategic planning scales.

Landscape and water levies

To enable the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board to lead the management of landscapes in the region, the Act provides for two types of levies to be raised: a regional landscape levy collected by councils from rate payers; and a water levy collected from water licence holders.

Why do we pay levies?

The levies are the primary source of funding for the management of the region’s landscapes and natural resources. Our landscapes benefit everyone, which is why we all contribute to the levies. The levies enable the Board to deliver important programs, and also enable it to leverage significant, additional funding - greatly increasing the amount of work achieved in the region.

Regional landscape levy

In the Hills and Fleurieu region, the regional landscape levy is raised based on the value of rateable land. The landscape levy is raised and collected by local councils. Councils pay quarterly contributions to the landscape board and gazette a levy rate to reimburse themselves for this amount.

The total amount of income collected from the landscape levy in 2026-27 reflects a CPI (Consumer Price Index) increase on the 2025-26 levy income. The council contributions are determined by each council area’s proportion of the total capital value of the region.

Table 4: Council contributions to regional landscape levy income, number of rateable properties and collection fees for councils for 2026/27.

Local government area	Council contribution to regional landscape levy 2026-27 (\$)	No. rateable properties	Council collection fees (\$)
Adelaide Hills	1,693,564	19,139	9,314
Alexandrina	1,358,367	21,313	10,010
Mount Barker	1,512,271	21,938	10,210
Onkaparinga	596,398	7,351	5,542
Victor Harbor	766,444	11,890	6,995
Yankalilla	392,778	6,028	5,119
Total	6,319,822	87,659	47,191

Water levy

Water levies are collected by the Department for Environment and Water on behalf of the Minister and paid to the landscape board.

In 2026-27, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board will raise water levies consistent with the levy basis used in previous years:

- for the Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges and Angas Bremer prescribed water resources, levies will continue to be charged based on a rate per ML of water allocated, with a minimum charge of \$200
- for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse, levies are based on the unit share held by the water licensee, with a minimum charge of \$200; and
- for the Western Mt Lofty Ranges, Central Adelaide, McLaren Vale, and River Murray prescribed water resources, levies will continue to be charged based on a rate per ML of water allocated.

The levy does not apply where the water is taken for domestic purposes or for the watering of stock not subject to intensive farming.

The levy rates for 2026-27 (Table 5) are increased by CPI of 2.4% on the 2025-26 rates.

Water resource sharing arrangements

The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board is responsible for water planning for the McLaren Vale Prescribed Wells Area, and the Western Mt Lofty Ranges and Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges (including the Angas Bremer) Prescribed Water Resource Areas.

For the prescribed water resources that are shared with neighbouring landscape regions, the water levy is shared between the boards in proportion to the amount of water allocated in each region (see Table 5). The board will work together with the Green Adelaide, Northern and Yorke, and Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Boards to ensure that water planning and programs are implemented collaboratively and consistently.

Table 5: Water levy rates and proportion of allocated water in each prescribed water resource in the Hills and Fleurieu region for 2026-27.

Prescribed Water Resource Area (PWRA) / Prescribed Wells Area (PWA) and allocation type	2025-26 levy rate	Proportion of the PWRA's allocated water within Hills & Fleurieu
Angas Bremer PWA water taking allocation	\$8.49 per ML of water allocated or a levy of \$200, whichever is greater	100%
Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges PWRA water taking allocation	\$8.49 per ML of water allocated or a levy of \$200, whichever is greater	98%
Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA water taking Lower Angas Bremer allocation (Flood)	\$2.03 / ML	100%
Central Adelaide PWA water taking allocation	\$7.89 / ML	12%
McLaren Vale PWA water taking allocation	\$7.89 / ML	96%
River Murray Prescribed Watercourse - All purpose consumptive pool (Class 3 (3a, 5))	\$0.00849 per unit share or a levy of \$200, whichever is greater	3%
Western Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA water taking allocation (including water levy on organisations authorised under section 105 to take water)	\$7.89 / ML	93%
Western Mount Lofty Ranges PWRA public water supply - SA Water fixed charge	\$1,577,141	100%

Map of the Hills and Fleurieu region





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