Business Plan

Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board

2019/22
Natural Resources Management Act 2004

Natural Resources Management Plan for the Eyre Peninsula, Natural Resources Management Region

I, Honourable David Speirs, Minister for Environment and Water, after taking into account and in accordance with the requirements of section 81 of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004, hereby adopt these amendments to the Investing Our Resources 2019-2022, volume of the Eyre Peninsula Regional Natural Resources Management Plan.

David Speirs MP
Minister for Environment and Water

Date: 27 May 2019.

The EP NRM Board is committed to working with our many partners and volunteers to maximise good natural resource management efforts throughout the region.
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Cover image: Rufous fieldwren (Calamanthus campestris), photo taken on the top of Marble Range, Eyre Peninsula by Peter Wilkins
The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board is confident that our 2019/22 Business Plan is well placed to contribute to sustainable and resilient EP landscapes into the future. Recent investments in both our Water Allocation Plan and our overarching strategic plan (the NRM Plan) have given us greater clarity while strong community input has shaped these strategic documents and will encourage ongoing partnerships.

As always, working with partners is a key part of our operational success and this includes industry groups, relevant government agencies, businesses, local government and individuals.

Sustainable primary production remains a Board priority as well as a regional priority; we will continue to work with land managers and farming groups on soils improvement, pest management and water management efficiencies.

Our strong focus on both biodiversity conservation and biosecurity remains. A suite of Pest Management Plans have been finalised, providing robust guidelines for everyone to use. To assist with our biodiversity understanding, further training of community members will occur to continue our Bird surveys and Bushland condition monitoring. These are very effective ways of engaging with our community while simultaneously gaining invaluable information about the health of various species.

As we prepare this Business Plan, the State Government is in the process of developing new Landscapes SA legislation. The new legislation is intended to strengthen community-led delivery of natural resources management at local and whole of landscape scales. The Board welcomes the reform agenda and aims to capitalise on the opportunities to strengthen the delivery of on ground works that address local priorities.

The Board is also proud to announce that it was selected as a successful tenderer for the delivery of the Australian Government’s Regional Land Partnership program. This may result in an additional $1.3 million per annum coming in to the region over the next three years, to deliver a range of services and projects, once negotiations with the Australian Government are completed.

Our Board is strongly committed to working closely with our community such that EP’s landscapes are strengthened into the future; regardless of the issues we need to face. Our regional NRM Plan shows a resilience thinking approach, that we believe will allow our communities to be sustained despite the various economic and other challenges that invariably face us.

We look forward to the challenge.

Mark Whitfield,
Presiding Member
Eyre Peninsula NRM Board
Managing our natural resources is a balance between conservation and sustainable use. To achieve this requires an integrated understanding of the region’s social, economic, environmental and cultural values and aspirations.

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board (the Board) has a strong regional presence and is well connected with the Eyre Peninsula community through the networks of its membership and their relationships with community and industry groups.

The Board has specific roles and responsibilities under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (NRM Act). One of those responsibilities is to develop a regional Natural Resources Management (NRM) Plan. The Plan sets a long term vision for management of natural resources on Eyre Peninsula and guides the actions of all organisations and individuals to optimise natural resources management outcomes of the Region and achieve the shared regional vision.

The Board’s vision for Eyre Peninsula is: “Natural resources managed to support ecological sustainability, vibrant communities and thriving enterprises in a changing climate”.

The EP NRM Plan is comprised of a range of planning at three levels, as shown below:

The Board pursues three goals aligned with the vision:
1. Sustainable management and use of land, sea and water
2. Healthy and resilient land, sea and water ecosystems
3. Active participation in Natural Resource Management

This document is an updated “Business Plan” for the period 2019-22. It considers emerging issues, current priorities for investment and builds on previous achievements for the next three years.

Regional NRM Planning suite – comprised of two components
Managing our Landscapes – Conversations for change

The management of the State’s natural resources is about to undergo significant reform. The State Government has announced that it will introduce a new Landscape SA Bill into Parliament in the first quarter of 2019, to replace the Natural Resources Management Act 2004.

The new legislation is intended to strengthen community-led delivery of natural resources management at local and whole of landscape scales. The focus is on empowering communities and land managers to be directly responsible for the sustainable management of their region’s natural resources with an emphasis on soil quality, water management and pest plant and animal control.

The Board welcomes the government’s reform agenda and aims to capitalise on the opportunities to strengthen the delivery of practical on ground works that address local priorities.

The Board recently completed this three year Business Plan for 2019-22. The plan has been developed in line with current legislative requirements and the Government’s priorities for natural resources management. Consistent with the government’s policy, the Board’s plan proposes that annual levy increases from 2019-2022 are limited to CPI.

Through the new business plan, the Board is investing significant resources in a range of programs that contribute to the government’s priorities of soil quality, water management and pest plant and animal control. A number of examples have been highlighted throughout the business plan.

The region

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Region covers a land area of approximately 80,000 square kilometres. The region includes 3,292 kilometres of coastline and 182 islands. Native vegetation covers about 43% of the land area, and 55% is farmed for cropping and livestock. The Eyre Peninsula is an ecotone of Australia, where the continent’s ecosystems of south-east and south-west join to create a unique biodiversity. Conservation is the major land use with nearly 100 national and conservation parks and over 650 heritage agreements, the latter of which occurs on private property.

The main economic drivers in the region are agriculture, aquaculture, commercial fishing, tourism, manufacturing and mining.

The region’s population is approximately 56,000 and over 60% of the population live in the two cities of Whyalla and Port Lincoln. The region has many small coastal and rural communities that are spread across the region. The Eyre Peninsula has eleven local governments, and some outside council areas. About 5.5% of the population is of Aboriginal descent (1.6% across SA), and the main cultural groups include Barngarla, Nauo, Wirangu, Kokatha and Mirning.
Strategic Framework

This three year Business Plan sets out the high-level actions to implement priorities and ultimately achieve the region’s goals and vision.

The figure below shows the relationship from Goals, through to sub-programs. Table 1 and Figure 2 identify expenditure and expected revenue for each program and sub-program.

Figure 1. Relationship between Goals and Programs

1. Sustainable management and use of land, sea and water
   To be achieved through:
   - Working with landholders and industries to sustainably use and manage natural resources
   - Facilitating sustainable commercial and recreational use of the coast and parks

2. Healthy and resilient land, sea and water ecosystems
   To be achieved through:
   - Improving understanding and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in a changing climate
   - Supporting management of land, sea and water to maintain or improve condition

3. Active participation in natural resource management
   To be achieved through:
   - Supporting communities and individuals to monitor and conserve natural resources in a changing climate
   - Supporting Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to care for country

- **Soil**
  Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators and Regenerative Agriculture Programs

- **Water**
  Water Affecting Activities and Water Allocation Planning

- **Pest Plant and Animals**
  District delivery, pest plant and animal control

- **Other**
  Coastal management, education and community engagement, planning, monitoring and strategy

- **Leadership and Accountability**
  Council cost recovery, Board administration, regional management and business administration
This Business Plan sets out the programs and sub-programs that will be funded by the Board to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It describes the expenditure and expected revenue for the three-year period from 2019/20 to 2021/22.

The Board’s investment will be delivered through a range of projects and approaches including direct investment, contracts for works or services, and grants to community organisations.

The (water and land) levies for 2019/20 and subsequent years will be limited to CPI increases only. As a result of this in 2019/20, the Board will raise an additional $76,987 from land levies and $11,938 from water levies to cover increasing costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Sub Program</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>RLP Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF), Regenerative Agriculture Program and other initiatives</td>
<td>510,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water Allocation Plan implementation, water planning and management and water affecting activities</td>
<td>264,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest plant and animals</td>
<td>Pest plant and animals activities in line with pest management plans through NRM Officer District delivery model</td>
<td>1,725,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other stewardship priorities</td>
<td>RLP Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery project, RLP Core Services, education and communications, compliance program</td>
<td>1,415,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and accountability</td>
<td>Council cost recovery, Board administration, regional management and business administration</td>
<td>870,043</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Total Expenditure** 4,785,858

**Figure 2 Percentage of funding allocated to each program for 2019-20**
Regional Land Partnership

Earlier this year, the Australian Government announced the National Landcare Program (the Program) for 2017 to 2023, which is being managed by the Department of the Environment and Energy and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the departments) and includes a range of measures to support natural resource management. The Program has six, five year objectives, however the ones relevant to Eyre Peninsula include:

- **Environment Outcomes:**
  - **Outcome 2:** By 2023, the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other EPBC Act priority species, is stabilised or improved.
  - **Outcome 4:** By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities.

- **Agriculture Outcomes**
  - **Outcome 5:** By 2023, there will be increased awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation.
  - **Outcome 6:** By 2023, there is an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant changes in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production.

A major component of the Program is the Regional Land Partnerships, which is a regional-scale delivery model that was put out to tender for each of the 56 natural resource regions across Australia.

The Board was fortunate to be selected as the delivery agent for Eyre Peninsula and the final package to be delivered in the region includes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2018-19 RLP Investment</th>
<th>2019-20 RLP Investment</th>
<th>2020-21 RLP Investment</th>
<th>2021-22 RLP Investment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORE services, regional planning, communications, project management, monitoring and evaluation etc.</td>
<td>331,388</td>
<td>329,794</td>
<td>309,701</td>
<td>340,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator network</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regenerative Agriculture Program¹</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>380,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect and Regenerate Endemic Vegetation project</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whibley Wattle Recovery project</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery project</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project design charges</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,416,388</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,309,794</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,289,701</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,320,300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Regional Land Partnership (RLP) projects for the next three years are still being negotiated as such amounts are subject to change.
Soil

The Eyre Peninsula agriculture sector (cropping and grazing), covers approximately 80% of the land mass on Eyre Peninsula, producing approximately 40% of the state’s wheat exports and over 20% of barley exports. Approximately 97% of the region’s grain crop is exported. The region also has over 1.5 million head of sheep and is the 17th largest sheep region in Australia.

The Board has funded the compilation of annual Soil Acidity Status Reports since the South Australian Soil Conservation Council released its Soil Conservation and Land Management Directions for the Agricultural Lands of South Australia in 2005. The 2017 Status Report states that Soil acidity on EP is increasing and it projects that 19% (509,000 ha) of agricultural land could become acidic in the next 10-50 years.

Large areas of sandy soils, about 550 000Ha (PIRSA Building Soil Organic Carbon Discussion Paper), are prone to increased risk of wind erosion due to a number of inherent characteristics which restrict crop germination and growth; and consequently surface cover for protection against wind erosion. These characteristics include low inherent fertility, poor moisture holding capacity and water repellence.

Inherent fertility is linked to organic carbon levels and cation exchange capacity and is considered to be low in the surface soil on around 83% of the area cleared for agriculture on Eyre Peninsula with around 16% of this area having very low inherent fertility.

An estimated 19% (521, 000 hectares) of land cleared for agriculture on EP has moderate to severe water repellency, and without careful management has a moderate or higher wind erosion risk.

Erosion protection field surveys conducted for over 15 years has seen an increase in the amount of days that the region is considered to be adequately protected from the risk of wind erosion.

The occurrence of wind erosion on Eyre Peninsula in recent times has been very low for cropping enterprises, however there is room to improve management practices of livestock enterprises to further reduce erosion risk. Despite the low occurrence of wind erosion the inherent risk level remains moderate to severe for around 30% of cleared agricultural land within the region and becomes a particular concern following bushfires and under extremely dry seasonal conditions which occur with greater frequency and magnitude as a result of climate change.

Upcoming priorities

- Support to land managers and agriculture groups across the region to continuously improve agricultural practices in the face of ongoing and emerging challenges, including soil constraints, pest impacts, vegetation management and climate change.
- Implementation of Regional Land Partnership, Regenerative Agriculture program, with the following outcomes required:
  - Landholders have increased awareness and knowledge of techniques for and benefits of monitoring, maintenance and amelioration of soil surface pH in priority and emerging soil acidification areas, through extension activities, pH mapping, pH testing and monitoring sites (outlying or emerging areas)
  - Demonstration sites established to increase awareness and knowledge of reducing sub soil constraints through management of soil carbon
  - Demonstration sites established to increase awareness and knowledge of reducing erosion by improving groundcover through plant based options, and
  - Forum held to increase awareness of the importance of improving detection and management of mallee seeps.
- Maintain the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator network to support farmers, agronomists and farming system groups and promote sustainable agricultural practices
The Regenerative Agriculture Program (RAP), funded through the Australian Government Regional Land Partnerships Program, will deliver projects at a local level in partnership with groups, focused on improving soil health on farms, targeting soil acidification, wind erosion, hillslope erosion and increasing organic matter.

Research shows that specific soil types are acidifying more rapidly than expected with recording as low as pH 3.7 in some paddocks. The RAP project will expand the successful ‘Restoring Soil pH through Farming Acid Soils’ project to 20 new farmers on Lower Eyre Peninsula and Cleve hills who are concerned about acidification limiting production and management options.

The RAP will also assist farmers in exploring the value of mixed species plant options to improve soil health, control weeds, and improve ground cover or explore better grazing options. Farmers will gain a better understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of undertaking mixed species planting, with workshops and a number of demonstration sites established this winter.

Some soils on Eyre Peninsula are not performing to their potential in maximising their soil water and nutrient efficiencies. An expressions of interest process is being used to establish ‘Proof of Concept’ in-paddock demonstrations in a range of soil types to increase organic matter levels and production.

Farmers in eastern Eyre Peninsula are seeing an increase in seeps and soaks emerging in their paddocks. The RLP program aims to get a better understanding of the extent and severity of seeps and soaks, with the delivery of a workshop focusing on this emerging issues and a landholder survey.

A free web based farm management tool, called nrmFarm was launched in November to give farmers the ability to produce and keep farm maps and store information to help with their seasonal and longer term farm planning.
Eyre Peninsula has a prevalence of saline water resources including large saline wetland complexes, brackish creeks and saline aquifers. Fresh groundwater is generally confined to discrete areas within limestone aquifers, which occurs in the southern and western extents of the region. Most of the region’s fresh groundwater is prescribed under the NRM Act, and there are controls to regulate take via conditions within water licences and the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas.

The main objective of the WAP is to share water between public water supply and groundwater dependent ecosystems, as several aquifers support wetlands of national importance.

In non-prescribed areas, there is no management regime to regulate the take of groundwater, yet there are provisions to control the location and construction of wells via water affecting activity (WAA) permits.

Watercourses are generally confined to the southern and eastern Eyre Peninsula due to the steeper topography, higher rainfall and the presence of clay soils or outcropping bedrock. These catchments have been extensively developed for agriculture, which has modified the hydrology and ecology. Most watercourses are ephemeral, which experience peak flows during winter, and often cease flowing by late spring or early summer. A WAA permitting scheme has been in place since 2006 to regulate water infrastructure, and this includes regulating dam development in the priority catchments.

**Upcoming priorities**

- Continued implementation and monitoring of the Water Allocation Plan for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Area
- Provision of advice and support in relation to water affecting activities enquiries
- Administration and prompt processing of water affecting activity permits
- Ensuring compliance with Water Affecting Activities policies and permits.
- Interim Review of the Water Allocation Plan in 2021

**Water Affecting Activities**

Water resources on Eyre Peninsula are precious and need to be managed sustainably. This includes watercourses, lakes, dams, wetlands and watercourse habitat, springs, soaks, and catchment landscapes. Some activities can have adverse impacts on the health and condition of water resources, the ecosystems that depend on them, as well as on downstream and other water users.

Water Affecting Activities are activities and works that can impact on the health and condition of water resources, water dependant ecosystems and other water users. Under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004, permit is required to undertake a Water Affecting Activity.

Water Affecting Activity Permits are approved by the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board and must comply with the Regional NRM Plan. Activities and works that require permits include but are not limited to:

- Constructing or enlarging dams or structures that collect or divert water
- Building structures, obstructing or depositing solid materials in a watercourse or lake (e.g. constructing creek crossings, fords and culvert causeways, erosion control, flood control and dumping material)
- Excavating material from a watercourse (e.g. excavating or modifying springs, soaks and waterholes, removing sand or soil, cleaning out drainage channels)
- Destroying vegetation in a watercourse (e.g. removal of reeds)
- Draining or discharging water or wastewater into a watercourse or lake (e.g. desalination waste, stormwater discharge, drainage and salinity control)
- Drilling, deepening and back filling wells, bores and ground water access trenches.

Management of water affecting activities is needed to protect our natural systems and water dependent ecosystems, maintain water quality and minimise impacts on other water users.

If you are planning to undertake a Water Affecting Activity, please go to our website and read the factsheet; Permits - Water Affecting Activities and don’t hesitate to contact the regions Water Resources Assessment Officer.
Controlling existing pest species while minimizing the risk of new pest threats are critical for reducing impacts to agricultural productivity, biodiversity and human health.

The NRM Act sets out the requirements for the control of pest animal and plants in South Australia and it is the individual’s responsibility to comply with these statutory requirements as they apply to a declared pest species.

To guide pest control across a large geographical area with limited resources, a risk assessment was undertaken by the Board to determine the Region’s priority pest animal and plant species, which was published in the Regional NRM Plan.

It is important to note that the risk assessment was conducted at a regional level using a generalised land use, however there are instances when a pest species pose a greater or lesser risk for a local area and/or specific land use. There is also the potential that the relative pest risk and/or the feasibility of control will change in the future from what was assigned in the Regional NRM Plan.

Pest management plans have been developed for the priority pest plants and animals found within the region and these can be accessed through the NREP Website.

Upcoming priorities

- Implementation of regional pest management plans for priority pest plants and animals including:
  - Pest plants - African boxthorn, African lovegrass, Aleppo pines, bone seed, bridal veil, buffel grass, caltrop, carrion flowers, fountain grass, gazania, gorse, Italian buckthorn, khaki weed, prickly pear, polygala, silverleaf nightshade and wild olives.
  - Pest animals – foxes, goats, rabbits, feral deer, dingo/wild dogs, and feral cats

- Ongoing delivery of the fox baiting program, with distribution to landholders across the region

- Collaboration with other regions and agencies to address emerging or potential biosecurity threats to the region

Fox baiting generates results

The red fox (Vulpes vulpes) has a natural distribution across the continents of Europe, Asia and North America. They were first successfully released in southern Victoria, at Point Cook and Ballarat, probably in 1871 and their subsequent spread across Australia was rapid, reaching South Australia by 1888 and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia by 1917.

Foxes are opportunistic predators and scavengers with a very wide dietary range, ranging in size from small skinks to wallabies and also feed on carrion and other scavenged materials. Invertebrates, berries and other vegetative material may be predominantly taken during summer, or autumn.

In the farming context, foxes and other predators can result in losses to livestock production systems. Some sheep breeds, for example merinos, which exhibit poor mothering ability, or new born lambs are often at risk and some foxes become habituated to the killing of lambs. Foxes can also be a vector for disease, with potentially significant economic and social costs where disease is introduced.

The Fox baiting program has been in operation across much of Eyre Peninsula (including major Parks) for more than ten years with some landholders baiting for 15 years. This program was built around local landholder and group participation, with a view to better landscape management. Baiting with 10.8 baits in autumn and spring is encouraged through the program as a minimum and most farmers prefer to bait before or during lambing seasons to reduce risks.

A recent survey of landholders indicated that 93% thought baiting improved productivity, with 75% also reporting that they increased production by between $1000-5000 pa. Of those surveyed 48% of landholders believed baiting had reduced fox numbers over the last 10 years and 40% felt that they had remained stable, which is an indicator that the program is having an effect in controlling fox numbers across the region.
Other Stewardship priorities

Our landscapes, made up of natural features such as our coastline, trees and wildlife are valued by many people and contribute to their unique sense of place in our diverse region.

Many people are keen protectors and managers of the bush in their local area and on their properties. The priorities of managing soil, water, pest plants and animals meaningfully contribute to the stewardship of nature.

Combining these with other actions such as sustainable agricultural practices, revegetation, and protecting and connecting vital habitats for priority native species, helps to achieve the community’s desired outcomes for their landscapes.

Sharing information and knowledge, through education and citizen science enables community, volunteers, land managers and owners to be effective stewards of their natural environment, and to see the benefits of their actions.

Partnerships between land managers, community groups, Landscape Boards, industry, Aboriginal nations, schools, local and state governments can collectively help to revitalise and restore the quality of our natural environments in a wide range of ways.

Effective stewardship of our natural environments is vital to achieving vibrant biodiversity, sustainable economy and resilient communities.

Upcoming priorities

- Delivery of the Regional Land Partnership Core Services and Environmental projects, including the Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery project
- Continue to support and source funding for landscape scale programs, such as WildEyre, and implement strategies to protect threatened species and ecological communities
- Support to community groups, volunteers and citizen scientists to undertake natural resource management activities across the region that build community capacity and knowledge, and assist resources condition monitoring
- Maintain the biodiversity monitoring program, which includes 355 bushland condition monitoring sites and bird monitoring sites across the region
- Collaboration with the education sector to implement the NRM Education Strategic Plan to provide nature based education initiatives
- Engage Local Government to assist with the delivery of NRM outcomes including stormwater management, roadside vegetation management and coastal management
- Implementation of the Caretakers of this land: Aboriginal engagement strategy
- Coordination of monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities across the organisation
Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery

The Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) project, funded through the Australian Government Regional Land Partnerships Program, could deliver activities focused on improving the condition of the Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh threatened ecological community and a variety of threatened species such as the Hooded Plover throughout the region.

Eyre Peninsula contains almost half the coastline of SA, 16 coastal embayments (half of SA’s estuary area) containing one third of SA’s intertidal samphire habitats. Projected sea level rise will likely result in coastal saltmarsh migration and have secondary impacts on fish and many other species dependent on saltmarsh habitat for survival. Eyre Peninsula’s saltmarshes are also internationally and nationally important sites for many other resident and migratory shorebirds, waders and waterfowl, including the Hooded Plover.

The saltmarshes are also important for state and regionally threatened species and support a number of threatened flora species listed under the EPBC Act and/or National Parks and Wildlife Act (SA) 1972 including a large proportion of the SA population of Bead Glasswort.

Within the region many coastal towns and each of the major regional centres have substantial areas of Coastal Saltmarsh nearby. There is an emerging awareness in the community of the ecological and economic importance of Coastal Saltmarsh and how its continued presence and good health is important for sustaining the regionally significant economic sectors of recreational fishing, nature based tourism and commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.

It is vital that this awareness be further expanded and leveraged into on-ground actions that preserve and restore this important ecological community, with particular emphasis on working with land holders, Aboriginal Homelands and local government, who have large areas of Coastal Saltmarsh under their care.

The activities and outputs proposed for the STAR project are varied in scope to enable the most effective assessment and identification of priority sites and subsequent abatement of the different primary and secondary threats impacting those priority sites.

Note - The Regional Land Partnership STAR project is still subject to negotiation and as such scope may change.
Staff and physical resources

South Australia’s NRM Boards deliver their priorities, policies and programs via a partnership with the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). For the Board, this means DEW, through ‘Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula’, with central corporate and policy support, delivers the Board’s annual business plan (including the Board’s statutory responsibilities under the NRM Act 2004) as well as high-level program and project management for all regional activities.

The Regional Director for Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula is responsible for the development of an Annual Implementation Plan between DEW and the Board. The Regional Director will be accountable for delivering the endorsed annual implementation plan, while working with the Board to oversee delivery through the regional workforce that delivers both Board and DEW programs.

There are 29.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) DEW staff funded by the Board for the 2019/20 financial year and the FTE numbers will be similar for the two subsequent years (subject to continued Australian Government funding).

The Board does not intend to acquire new physical resources, infrastructure or land during the 2019/22 period.

Aside from DEW, the Board’s partners include Local Government, non-government organisations, volunteer groups, industry groups, land managers and other government agencies. In the majority of projects the Board has a facilitation role in delivering on-ground activities.
Sources of funding (income)

The Board receives funds from a range of sources to implement the strategies and actions described in the Business Plan (Table 3). These funds are also used throughout the year to leverage additional funds to the region, either directly to the Board or through some of our partner organisations.

Table 3. Sources of funding

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Regional NRM levies sub-total</td>
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<td>3,473,792</td>
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<td>NRM Levy (Division 1)</td>
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<td>NRM Levy (Division 2)</td>
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<td>State Government sub-total</td>
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<td>1,320,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLP - Core services</td>
<td>461,388</td>
<td>459,794</td>
<td>439,701</td>
<td>470,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLP - Project services</td>
<td>955,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sub-total</td>
<td>515,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained Earnings</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,415,529</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,785,858</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,796,493</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,920,885</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This table does not show the funding that the State Government (DEW) provides to support management of Natural Resources EP, management of public lands (National Parks), marine parks and fire in the region. These services provide important support for the Board’s activities in the region.

2 NRM Division 1 and 2 Levy has been calculated based on a CPI increase of 2.7%. This will need to be adjusted in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to align with current CPI, and as such these figures are subject to change.

3 Other State Government funding includes a range of projects and service related funding, some of which conclude in 2019/20, other such as the DPTI Roadside weed control funding are subject to annual review.

4 Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) projects for the next three years are still being negotiated as such amounts are subject to change.

5 Retained Earnings were utilized for the delivery of priority Sustainable Development Projects in the region in 2018/19 which was approved by Cabinet. No further allocation has been made for outer years.

Figure 3 Proportion of total funding received from each source in 2019/20
Information on NRM levies

The types of NRM levies

The Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (the NRM Act) established the NRM Boards to assist with the protection of the State’s natural resources, and their sustainable and integrated management. To enable the Board to undertake its functions, the NRM Act provides for two forms of levy to be raised. They are:

- **Division 1** – regional NRM levy – Section 95 of the NRM Act allows for levies to be collected by constituent councils and the Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation collects outside of the Local Government area within the EP NRM Region consistent with Section 97 of the NRM Act, and
- **Division 2** – NRM water levy – Section 101 of the NRM Act enables the Minister to declare a water levy or levies payable by holders of water licences.

Why have levies

The NRM levies are a primary source of funding for the management of the region’s natural resources. Funds raised through the levies ensure that works are undertaken to achieve the region’s vision of “Natural resources managed to support ecological sustainability, vibrant communities and thriving enterprises in a changing climate”. The levies also provide the Board with the ability to leverage additional government funds, which greatly increases the amount of work that can be accomplished in our region.

Basis of the Levy

Under the NRM Act, a NRM Board has the authority to define the most appropriate basis and rates for NRM levies. Under section 95(3)(a) of the NRM Act, the following options are provided as the basis for calculating the regional NRM levy:

- **Option 1** – the value of rateable land
- **Option 2** – a fixed charge of the same amount on all rateable land
- **Option 3** – a fixed charge of an amount that depends on the purpose for which the rateable land is used
- **Option 4** – the area of rateable land
- **Option 5** – the purpose for which the rateable land is used and the area of the land
- **Option 6** – the location of the rateable land.

In 2017/18, following an in-depth social and economic impact assessment, the basis for levy collection in Eyre Peninsula changed to Option 3, where a fixed charge is applied depending on the purpose for which the rateable land is used, which was approved in April 2016.

To enable consistency in the application of Option 3 a new regulation was developed titled - Natural Resources Management (Financial Provisions) Variation Regulations 2016, which provides the purposes for which rateable land is used are prescribed.

Levy rates and collection from Local Government

Table 4 outlines each Local Government’s contribution to the regional NRM levy for the 2019/20 financial year. The table further includes collection fees that Local Government can recover as per Regulation 4C of the Natural Resources Management (Financial Provisions) Regulation 2005.
Table 4: Estimated regional NRM Levy contributions, and establishment and collection fees per Local Government area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government</th>
<th>Regional NRM Land Levy Contribution ($) 2019/20</th>
<th>Council Collection fee ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Ceduna</td>
<td>173,450</td>
<td>2,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Cleve</td>
<td>109,006</td>
<td>2,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Elliston</td>
<td>99,610</td>
<td>2,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Franklin Harbour</td>
<td>84,483</td>
<td>2,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Kimba</td>
<td>70,448</td>
<td>2,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula</td>
<td>353,801</td>
<td>3,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Port Lincoln</td>
<td>666,667</td>
<td>4,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Streaky Bay</td>
<td>163,626</td>
<td>2,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Tumby Bay</td>
<td>184,834</td>
<td>2,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whyalla</td>
<td>906,433</td>
<td>5,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Wudinna</td>
<td>74,932</td>
<td>2,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total quantum (local government areas only)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,887,290</strong></td>
<td><strong>35,210</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Council areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,080</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total quantum (including outside council areas)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,928,370</strong></td>
<td><strong>35,210</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levy rates 2019/2020

Changing the basis of the regional NRM levy to land use purpose (Option 3) in 2017/18 was driven by the ‘beneficiary pays’ principle. This resulted in primary producers paying a levy that is two times the base rate, as they are more likely to receive a benefit from NRM programs. In comparison, residential properties pay the base rate of levy as they are less likely to receive a direct benefit from NRM programs. Commercial and industrial properties pay one and half times the base rate, as many of the region’s businesses indirectly benefit from NRM programs (e.g. agricultural suppliers, tourism operators, fish processors, steel manufacturers, etc).

In 2019/20 the regional NRM levy quantum is $2,928,370 (refer Table 4), which will be collected from Councils and Out of Council areas properties.

For rateable properties inside Council areas a base rate of $77.97 is estimated for 2019/20 financial year, and the specific multipliers and the corresponding levy rate for each land use purpose is shown in Table 5.

For out of council areas the Board has retained the original fixed rate basis, which will be $85.58 per assessment in 2019/20.

The levy will be increased by Consumer Price Index (CPI) in each of the three years covered by this business plan. CPI has been applied at a rate of 2.7% for the 2019/20 financial year, with the rate to be applied in other years to be determined in the preceding financial year.

Table 5: Levy rate per land use purpose for 2019/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use</th>
<th>No. properties</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Levy rate per land use ($)</th>
<th>Quantum per land use ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>25,287</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77.97</td>
<td>1,971,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1,688</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>116.96</td>
<td>197,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>116.96</td>
<td>50,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Producers</td>
<td>2,748</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>155.95</td>
<td>428,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other &amp; Vacant</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77.97</td>
<td>239,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,223</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,887,290</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NRM Water Levy

The NRM Act specifies the options for collecting a NRM water levy (Division 2) from water licensees. The levy may include one or more of these options:

- **Option 1** – a fixed charge
- **Option 2** – the quantity of water allocated
- **Option 3** – the quantity of water received or taken
- **Option 4** – the quantity of water passing through any works
- **Option 5** – the size, type or capacity of any works
- **Option 6** – the quantity of water used
- **Option 7** – the share of the water that makes up the relevant water resource
- **Option 8** – the area of land where the water may be used, or the area of land where the water is used
- **Option 9** – the effect that the taking or using of the water has, or may have, on the environment, or some other effect or impact that, in the opinion of the Minister, is relevant and that is capable of being determined, measured or applied.

The NRM water levy will continue to be based on the quantity of water allocated (Option 2) and the purpose for which the water is taken. The NRM water levy does not apply to stock and domestic use.

The total NRM water levy collected from water licensees in the Southern Basins and Musgrave Wells Areas will increase by 2.7% from $442,156 in 2018/19 to $454,094 in 2019/20 (see table 6).

The levy rates in Table 6 will increase by CPI in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

A landholder who is also a water licensee within the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas will be required to pay a land based NRM levy and a water based NRM levy.

---

**Table 6. NRM Water Levy 2019/20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Levy rate (cents per kilolitre)</th>
<th>Water allocated in 2019/20 (kilolitre)</th>
<th>Total NRM water levy quantum($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public water supply purposes</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>8,919,607</td>
<td>$414,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation, industrial and recreational</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>732,622</td>
<td>$18,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and energy sectors</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>436,000</td>
<td>$20,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,088,228</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$454,094</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social impacts of levies

Under the NRM Act, the Board is required to assess the potential social impacts of imposing NRM levies. A Social and Economic Impact Assessment was prepared by EconSearch Pty Ltd in October 2015. The assessment used representative financial models to consider the impacts of the NRM levies on people and businesses using the following measures:

- **Households** – after tax on average personal income and low income earners
- **Primary Production** – Earnings before Interest and Tax (EBIT)
- **Commercial and industrial businesses** – Gross Operating Surplus (GOS); a measure of a firm’s profit that represents the surplus generated by operating activities after labour and other operating costs have been paid. GOS is used as the measure of profit for non-farm industries as the economic model from which the data are drawn is industry-wide and not detailed enough to calculate EBIT.

A copy of this report is available on request.

Impact of regional NRM Levies

The Social and Economic Assessment found this land use purpose levy would have:

- a minor impact on households; ranging from 0.13% for the mean after tax income, through to 0.30% for single full age pensions
- a minor impact on dryland farms; for both marginal operations and profitable enterprises
- a minor impact on business profitability across most sectors of non-farm businesses. Businesses in the professional services, scientific and technical services could be significantly impacted because of the low median Gross Operating Surplus in these sectors. Education, training, arts and recreational services could also be moderately impacted.

Please note these percentages are reflective of the rates applied in the modelling, and rates may change upon the Board approving the multiplier for specific land uses.

Impact of NRM water levies

In regard to the NRM water levy there will be only one minimal change to the basis of the levy, which is the introduction of a new classification to allow for a differential rate for water supply to the energy and minerals sector. The impacts of the changes to water levy were assessed, with the results indicating a minimal impact on all water licensees.

**Guide for impacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt;1%</th>
<th>1 to &lt;5%</th>
<th>&gt;5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment rated the impacts on households, businesses and/or industries using the following scale of impacts on the measures above.

Based on the assessment of impacts in comparison to other models that were assessed, the Board considered that the NRM land levy would not place an undue burden on ratepayers.
Decision making principles

Board investment is targeted at the highest priority outcomes contained within the Regional NRM Plan, regardless of how it is raised. Below are the principles the Board use to support their decision making processes:

- **Core Function** – statutory requirement under the Natural Resources Management Act or other legislative or regulatory requirements.
- **Strategic** – alignment with the regional NRM Plan, Landscapes SA reform priorities and other key regional plans.
- **Outcomes focused** – will lead to sustainable use, protection and conservation of the region’s natural resources.
- **Cost/Benefit** – in value, outcomes, partnerships and community engagement – delivery of local, catchment or regional outcomes, across one specific industry or multiple industries or communities sectors.
- **Capacity and capability** – resources, knowledge and skills required to undertake the work are available within the Board, community or partner organisations.
- **Collaborative** – forms partnerships with other groups and organisations to share responsibility and deliver the best possible natural resources management outcomes.
- **Innovative** – opportunity to drive innovation, demonstrate best practice and/or increase understanding of natural resources.
- **Visibility** – raising the importance of natural resources and the work being undertaken by the Board, the community and partner organisations.
- **Fairness** – no single person, organisation or group of organisations is treated more or less favourably than others.
- **Equality** – people who are the beneficiaries of natural resources management both indirectly and directly in the region should contribute accordingly.
- **Administrative accountability** – public accountability for efficient and effective use of State, Australian Government and levy funds.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board and DEW have some long established monitoring projects and data sets to monitor the state and condition of the natural resources and related trends on Eyre Peninsula. This includes monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to manage threats as well as protect specific natural resources. Limited resources means that monitoring needs to be prioritised in space and time, optimal indicators identified and cost-effective data collection strategies implemented.

Other

Information on the Board membership, role and activities can be found at: www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/eyrepeninsula/home
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Region Map