2017-18 investment and expenditure at a glance

The role of a Natural Resources Management Board

There are eight natural resources management (NRM) regions in South Australia. Each has a regional NRM Board which works with all sectors of the community and all levels of government to provide strategic leadership for the management of natural resources. NRM Boards are responsible for connecting community to NRM management and facilitating partnerships that result in better outcomes at a local, regional and state-wide level.

NRM Boards are responsible for developing regional NRM plans that create a vision and set targets for the environment in each region. They are developed and delivered in partnership with the community and stakeholders, and aim to ensure that there is a balance between the needs of people and the needs of the environment.

Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB) develops an annual operational plan that clearly aligns the work of Natural Resources SAMDB with the strategic directions of the South Australian Natural Resources Management (SAMDB NRM) Board and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

How we were funded in 2017-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding 2017-18</th>
<th>Total investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources management levies</td>
<td>$14,028,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government</td>
<td>$11,013,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grants</td>
<td>$761,888</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INVESTMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,803,244</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How investment was allocated

- **Water** $12.3m 49%
- **Land** $5.7m 20%
- **People** $4.2m 17%
- **Biodiversity** $3.2m 13%
- **Atmosphere** $0.37m 1%

Percentage of total investment into the region allocated to priority areas.
Key achievements

> 58 irrigation efficiency projects were completed and water recovered for the environment through the Commonwealth On-Farm Further Irrigation Efficiency (COFFIE) Pilot program. $9.0 million of investment was secured on behalf of SA River Murray irrigators. Announcement of the new Murray-Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program in July 2018 will result in the COFFIE Pilot program concluding in October 2018.

> Management of six water allocation plans (WAPs) across the SAMDB region. This included adoption of a new River Murray WAP in October 2017 and drafting amendments to the River Murray WAP to address community priorities and Basin Plan requirements.

> Flows for the Future, the world’s first landscape-scale program of its kind, has assisted landholders at more than 110 sites to pass crucial low flows of water through the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges. This achievement is helping to support water allocation levels in the area and address the degradation of waterways in the ranges.

> The ‘Reconnecting Kumarakong’ project was approved for funding through the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project, to improve water flow to over 220 hectares of significant wetland habitat and boost population numbers of threatened species including the Yarra pygmy perch, southern pygmy perch, Murray hardyhead and southern bell frog.

Key achievements and statistics at a glance

**Water**

**Water planning and management**

Board’s vision: To manage water resources for the benefit of multiple users including the environment in a changing climate.

- Water returned to the environment from on-farm irrigation efficiency improvement projects (since commencement): 20.3 GL, 422 landholders
- Water affecting activity permits issued: 38
- Managed wetlands receiving environmental water: 4,708 hectares
- Environmental water delivered within the region over the past 10 years: 22.6 GL
- People engaged in one-on-one water management discussions through Flows for Future Program: 360 landholders

**People**

**Community engagement**

Board’s vision: seeing more people doing more NRM better – through behavioural and generational change

- Community groups supported: 122
- Number of volunteers (NRM and citizen scientists): 2924
- Grants awarded: 87 valued over $430,000
- Young people involved in NRM Education activities: 2400
- Workshops and training events to engage and build the capacity of Aboriginal communities: 54
- Aboriginal participants employed and trained in natural resources management: 35

Key achievements

> Over 10,800 people visited the online Regional Action Plan (RAP). The online tool provides information to individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in NRM and identifies priorities and actions at a localised scale.

> The Aboriginal Partnerships team facilitated a partnership between the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region (First Peoples) and the Murray Mallee Local Action Planning Group to undertake fauna surveys at culturally significant rock hole and soak sites in the mallee.

> Upper Murray River Murray Youth Council (RMYC) members successfully developed and installed the Peter Jacobs Trail at Maize Island Conservation Park in Waikerie. The trail and interpretive signage was developed to support, protect and educate visitors about the importance and benefit of the natural environment.

> A new community grants program was designed to deliver on the Board’s strategic directions and key focus areas.
Biodiversity

Native species restoration and conservation

Board’s vision: To manage our biodiversity assets to improve resilience of ecosystems into the future for all, while achieving landscape scale ecological change.

- Hectares of native vegetation actively managed for conservation: 112,931 hectares
- Hectares of conservation restoration activities: 3,783 hectares
- Fauna and flora survey sites monitored: 76
- Species records contributed to the Biological Databases of South Australia through citizen science monitoring: 14,911

Key achievements

- The future of the nationally endangered Mallee emu-wren looks a little brighter after 40 of these small birds were recently brought back to SA and reintroduced into one of the region’s national parks. Re-establishing the Mallee emu-wren population will give the species increased security for the future after catastrophic wildfires in 2014 caused the extinction of them in SA. Funding and support provided by the Threatened Species Recovery Fund, Zoos SA, Zoos Victoria, Rotary International, the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, BirdLife Australia, Parks Victoria, La Trobe University and Monash University.

- Find our fungi booklet was developed and launched in partnership with Fungimap and the University of Adelaide to help people identify 10 key fungi species in the SAMDB. It has been a very popular publication.

- Populations of two nationally endangered plants, the metallic sun-orchid and the Monarto mintbush, were given a significant boost with 80 sun-orchids and over 850 mintbush planted. Seed of the metallic sun-orchid was collected in 2013 and grown in partnership with the Orchid Recovery Group at the Botanic Gardens Victoria.

- Restoration of the Milang foreshore was completed in collaboration with the Alexandrina Council and the local community including the Milang and District Community association and the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority.

Land

Parks and sustainable landscapes

Board’s vision: To work with landholders towards sustainable production systems

- Landholders supported in pest animal management activities: 450
- Individuals engaged in sustainable agriculture capacity building activities: 1373
- Landholders provided advice on landscape scale conservation and restoration: 500
- Weather station and soil moisture probes providing decision making data to landholders: 46 weather, 40 soil

Key achievements

- 24 NRM Agricultural Knowledge Small Grants were provided to Agricultural Bureaus, farmer groups and farmer support groups to build knowledge on aspects of farming and natural resources management.

- 18 community events or projects were delivered with support from the SAMDB regional Landcare facilitator, engaging 286 members of the community. Events were tailored to meet local community needs and foster relationships between attendees, presenters and the broader agricultural community.

- An experienced and accredited wild dog trapper was contracted to train 14 District Officers in wild dog trapping techniques through the nationally funded “Pests Cost us All” program. As a result, these trained staff can now provide support to participating landholders, contributing to the state wild dog management initiative. In addition to this, the “Pests Cost us All” program provided the opportunity for 21 landholders to attend a predator management workshop at Lameroo.

- Park maintenance and campsite upgrades were completed at Morgan Conservation Park, and Danggali Conservation Park and Wilderness Protection Area through an ongoing partnership with the Department for Correctional Services.
Working together with community, industry and government, we aim to ensure the region’s natural assets of healthy soils, good quality water, healthy bushlands and wetlands are maintained into the long term to sustain our quality of life, livelihoods and the economy.

Atmosphere

Effective adaptation to climate change

Board’s vision: To build an increased understanding of the adaptive capacity of the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weather station and soil moisture probes providing decision making data to landholders*</th>
<th>46 weather</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 soil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-farm irrigation efficiency improvement projects*</td>
<td>20.3 GL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>422 landholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly connected with youth to increase their understanding of climate change</td>
<td>115</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: These figures have been represented in another value, but equally can be presented in the atmosphere value.

Building resilience to a changing climate

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin’s community, economy and environment are well adapted to a variable climate. They have shown great resilience and an ability to withstand severe droughts. Natural Resources SAMDB, together with land managers, have worked to maintain and enhance the biodiversity values of the region by building an increased understanding and resilience to a changing climate by:

- Minimising the risk posed by pest plants and animals through targeted control and landholder awareness and training
- Reducing threats to, and improving the condition and connectedness of native vegetation
- Reducing the risk and impact of extreme events by conducting prescribed burns in conservation parks to reduce fire risk
- Helping landholders adapt their farming techniques to climate pressures through irrigation efficiency improvement projects, running sustainable farming workshops and field events and investing in local weather stations and soil moisture probes to improve forecasting
- Engaging and empowering young people to take action on climate change through involvement in NRM Education activities.

For more information

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