

# Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board MERI Framework 2022-26

July 2023



# MERI Framework Purpose

This MERI (monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement) Framework supports the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board to **track, assess** and **report** on its progress against the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Plan 2021-26, as well as **learn from**, and **improve** our work throughout the plan's delivery.

The Landscape Plan identifies five priorities for sustainable landscape management in the Hills and Fleurieu region, and focus areas for the Board to improve the health of natural resources in the region.

## Our plan's priorities

Priorities		Focus areas
 <p><b>Land</b> Regenerating biodiverse and highly productive landscapes</p>	L1.	Reduce the impact and spread of weeds
	L2.	Reduce the impact of pest animals and impact-causing native animals
	L3.	Support the uptake of regenerative agriculture and land management
	L4.	Future-proof our agriculture
 <p><b>Water</b> Managing water resources sustainably</p>	W1.	Deliver water resource planning to meet ecological, economic, cultural and social needs
	W2.	Improve on-ground management of our water resources
	W3.	Build understanding of our water resources
 <p><b>Nature</b> Conserving natural places, ecosystems and wildlife</p>	N1.	Protect and restore our native vegetation and freshwater ecosystems
	N2.	Conserve and rehabilitate our coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems
	N3.	Recover our threatened species and ecological communities
 <p><b>Climate</b> Becoming a carbon neutral and climate resilient region</p>	C1.	Transition to net zero carbon emissions
	C2.	Build climate resilience of our nature
	C3.	Build climate resilience of our communities and agriculture

# How the board is contributing to the Landscape Plan (Program Logic)

The board carries out a range of activities aimed at improving the health and resilience of the Hills and Fleurieu region. The diagram in Figure 1 is a simplified model or 'program logic' showing the anticipated outcomes of board operations across all priority areas. Flowing left to right, the model shows how the board's work is designed to influence landholder capacity, local networks and localised threats, in order to support improvements in landscape health and resilience. Board activities have a direct impact in three ways. These represent short-term outcomes:

## Building landholder stewardship capacity

This is achieved through raising awareness (about landscape needs and challenges) and supporting landholders and volunteers, through tactics such as the provision of information, advice and training. We assume that over time, shifts in people's awareness and attitudes, and more importantly, their practices of land management and stewardship, will flow through to healthier soils, waterways and restoration of biodiversity.

## Building multi-stakeholder collaboration

Where possible, the board seeks to amplify change through collective impact by aligning regional stakeholders - identifying partnership opportunities, coordinating goals and activities, and increasing shared funding. The board's interests and objectives are shared with a range of other organisations, including farming groups, environmental NGOs and other agencies.

## Mitigating localised threats

Many of the region's natural resource assets are in decline and/or in critical states of health. Addressing these risks is often time-critical and requires localised interventions targeting unaddressed landscape threats. For example, actions to support the survival of threatened animal or plant populations, control programs to manage regional grazing pressure, and tackle weeds after fire-events. In these circumstances, the board delivers services directly.

The board uses this program logic model to guide how it monitors and evaluates its operations as well as learn from and improve its outcomes on the region's landscapes.

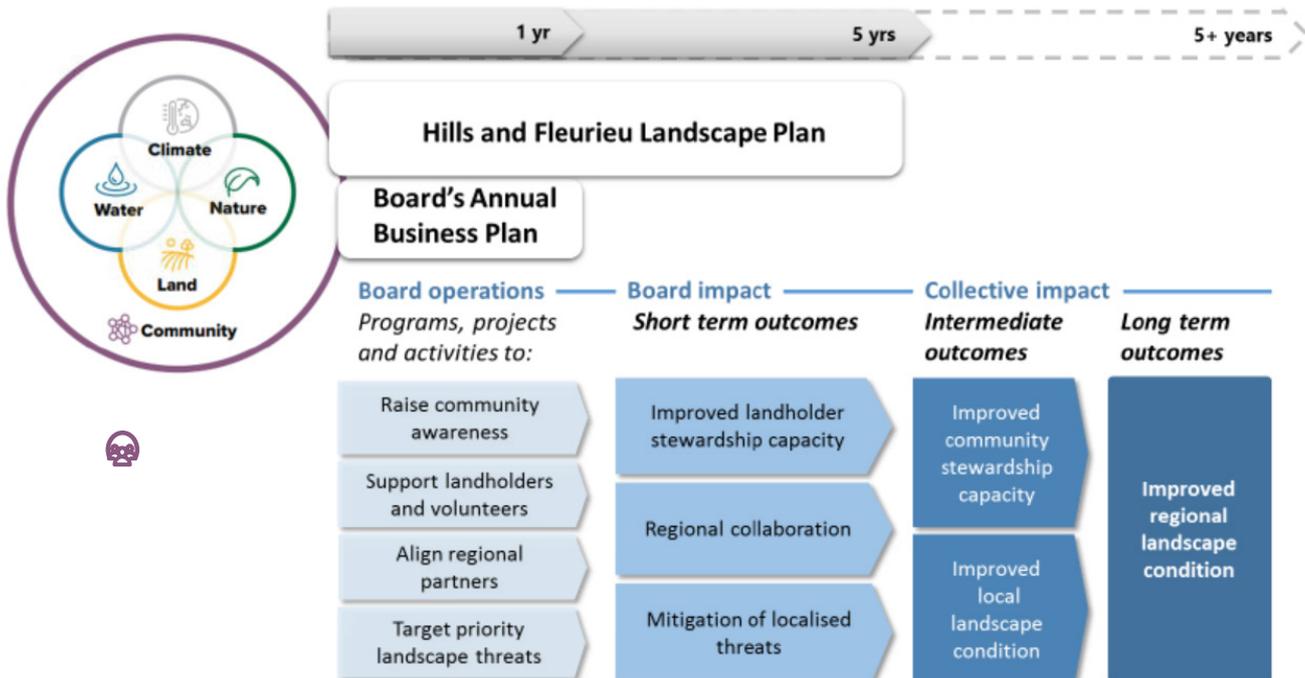
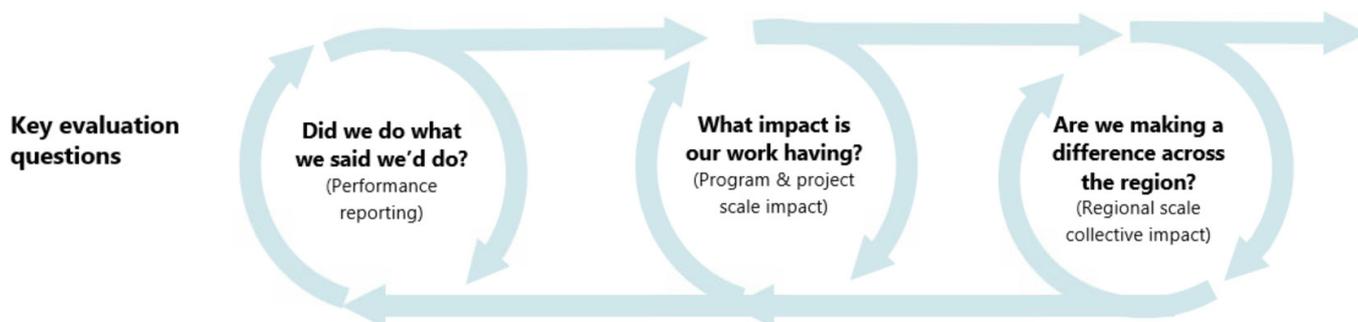


Figure 1: Program Logic showing how the board influences change across the priorities in the Landscape Plan.

# Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Developing a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning is important for improving and adapting how we manage landscapes. ‘Triple loop learning’ is a concept that encourages

organisations to focus on learning at different scales. The board has incorporated this thinking in the design of its evaluation and reporting.



	Board functions and program activities	Short-term outcomes	Intermediate to long-term outcomes
What we monitor	<b>Activities</b> (standard outputs) by priority and focus area	<b>Indicators</b> of short term outcomes	<b>Indicators</b> of intermediate and long-term outcomes
Key evaluation activities	<p><b>Board performance review</b> Each year in August, the board reviews its leadership, client focus, systems and processes.</p> <p><b>Activity monitoring</b> Board activities are monitored and assessed throughout delivery of the Annual Business Plan</p>	<p><b>Project and program evaluation</b> At project closure or at intervals designed in the project plan (1- 3 years), projects are evaluated to improve efficiency, effectiveness and impact.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Plan evaluation</b> In 2024-25, the board's contribution to the Landscape Plan 2021-2026 and related impact on the region's socio-ecological (human-landscape relationships) and bio-physical resource conditions will be evaluated.</p>
Reporting	<p><b>Quarterly Project Progress Report</b> Internal report to the Board on project activities</p> <p><b>Annual report</b> Statutory report on board functions, finances, internal systems and processes</p> <p><b>Annual achievement report</b> Highlights the main outputs from the board's investment, helping to evaluate the design and efficiency of board initiatives.</p>	<p><b>Impact reports</b> Produced to show the short-term outcomes of program activities. These focus on the impacts that can be closely attributed to program activities.</p> <p><b>Contractual reports</b> To meet externally funded project requirement</p>	<p><b>Intermediate and long-term indicator tracking dashboard</b> The website will display a summary of intermediate and long-term indicator condition and trend which will be updated when data becomes available</p>

See Appendix 1 List of indicators

# Assessing our impact - Indicators of progress

To understand its impact, the board monitors activities it undertakes (outputs of its work) and three levels of outcome indicators (See Appendix 1). Activities and outcome indicators are used to monitor board performance and program achievements, as well as the outcomes of program activities on landscape health at short, intermediate and long-term scales.

Evaluation of board impact and associated changes in landscape health involves tracking shifts in these indicators over time.

## Short-term outcomes

Short-term outcomes reflect impacts of the board's programs. The board collects data on short-term outcome indicators to evaluate the impact of its capacity building with landholders and community; its efforts to build alignment among partners; and its on-ground programs addressing critical landscape threats. Data collected on short-term indicators (annual and biennial) will help the board learn what works in what contexts and enable it to adapt program design in response.

## Intermediate outcomes

Intermediate outcomes reflect shifts in community capacity, and localised improvements in landscape health (socio-ecological and biophysical indicators). These contribute to long term changes in landscape health at a regional scale.

## Long term outcomes – monitoring and evaluating landscape health

The board's work is aimed at having a positive impact on the long-term health and resilience of landscapes in the Hills and Fleurieu. A range of monitoring and data collection processes are used including waterway monitoring, surveys, questionnaires and focus groups, GIS and remote sensing and in-field mapping by board staff.

At the regional level, changes in long-term indicators may take more than 10 years to be observed. Changes are the result of multiple drivers, many of which are outside the board's control. For this reason, improvements or declines in long-term indicators can only be attributed to board programs indirectly. The board is currently establishing baselines for a number of key indicators.

Choice of indicators has been informed by a combination of factors including:

- Review of bio-physical landscape conditions in Hills and Fleurieu (see Snapshot of our region documents)
- Availability of relevant 'State of the Environment' datasets
- Development of new data collection and assessment tools
- Board capacity (where the board is best positioned to address monitoring and data gaps).

Note that many of the long term indicators shown in Appendix 1 are composite values, aggregated from multiple measures of condition.

# Appendix 1 - List of indicators

## ACTIVITIES

	Indicator	Metrics	
Raising community awareness   Supporting landholders and	Advice provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of recipients</li> <li>number of site visits</li> </ul>	All
	Awareness raising communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of media releases</li> <li>number of social media posts</li> <li>number of people reached through social media posts</li> <li>number of mail out recipients</li> </ul>	All
	Awareness raising activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of events/trainings</li> <li>number of participants attending events</li> <li>number of participant hours</li> </ul>	All
	Capacity building activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of events/trainings</li> <li>number of participant hours</li> <li>number of participants</li> </ul>	All
	Demonstration sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of sites</li> <li>number of participants</li> <li>number of site visits</li> </ul>	L
	Grants provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dollar value</li> <li>number of recipients</li> </ul>	P
Aligning regional partners	Community science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of participants</li> <li>number of events</li> </ul>	P
	First Nations involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of events incorporating traditional ecological knowledge</li> </ul>	P
	Network participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of networks supported</li> </ul>	All
	Regional dialogues on contentious issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of forums (ie meetings or community sessions)</li> </ul>	P
	Research partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of projects</li> </ul>	All
	Supporting non LHF events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of events</li> <li>number of participant hours</li> <li>number of participants attending events</li> </ul>	All
	Volunteer involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of groups provided with insurance</li> <li>number of hours worked/ volunteered</li> </ul>	All
	Water planning engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of networks</li> <li>number of participants</li> </ul>	W

	Indicator	Metrics	
Targeting priority landscape threats	Pest animal control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of pest animals culled</li> <li>number of sites under active management</li> <li>number of bait distribution days</li> <li>number of compliance action orders</li> <li>site visits</li> <li>hectares</li> </ul>	L N
	Referral responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of comments/ feedbacks provided</li> </ul>	L W N C
	Revegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hectares planted</li> <li>number of plants</li> </ul>	W
	Threatened species management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of breeding programs</li> </ul>	N
	Weed control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of sites under active management</li> <li>hectares under active management</li> <li>number of compliance action orders</li> <li>site visits</li> <li>hectares</li> </ul>	L N
	Water Affecting Activity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of landholder interactions</li> <li>number of permits assessed</li> <li>number of permits issued</li> <li>number of compliance action orders</li> </ul>	W

## SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

	Indicator	Metrics	
Improved land manager stewardship capacity	Land managers' knowledge and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of participants with increased knowledge and awareness</li> </ul>	All
	Adoption of practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of land managers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regenerative agriculture practices</li> <li>carbon farming practices</li> <li>habitat/biodiversity protection/restoration practices</li> <li>waterway protection and restoration practices</li> <li>climate resilience training and advice</li> </ul> </li> <li>number, km of fenced waterways, swamps and wetlands</li> <li>number of plants in waterway revegetation</li> </ul>	L W N C
Increased regional collaboration	Community trust and involvement in landscape planning, science and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage participant increased trust in science and policies</li> </ul>	P
	External finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>total amount leveraged</li> <li>total amount investment</li> </ul>	All
	First Nations involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number and percentage of projects that have First Nations involvement</li> <li>number of projects providing First Nations employment</li> <li>percentage of LHF budget spent to support First Nations businesses</li> <li>number of properties accessed by First Nations people</li> </ul>	P
	Land managers' - alignment with Hills and Fleurieu priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of volunteer groups aligned with landscape scale priorities</li> <li>percentage of landholder (public and private) aligned with landscape scale priorities</li> </ul>	P
	Volunteer involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of groups addressing priority assets/issues</li> </ul>	All
	Mitigation of localised threats	Environmental flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of landholders with provisions for environmental flows</li> <li>number of landholders passing environmental flows</li> <li>volume released to priority catchments</li> <li>number of zones that are passing of failing EWPs</li> </ul>
Threatened ecosystems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of threatened ecosystems under management</li> </ul>	N
Threatened species management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of threatened species with actions implemented</li> </ul>	N
Water Affecting Activity management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landholder compliance rate</li> <li>compliance response rate</li> </ul>	W
Weed impacts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of public notifications</li> <li>number of local infestations eradicated</li> <li>number of nursery inspections leading to changes in practices/species sold, etc</li> <li>reduction in impacts at managed sites (% sites)</li> </ul>	L

## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

	Indicator	Metrics	
Improved regional stewardship capacity	Stewardship capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number of land managers with a sense of responsibility towards landscape stewardship</li> <li>percentage of partner organisations aligned with landscape scale priorities</li> <li>percentage of land managers with a sense of responsibility towards First Nations heritage protection</li> <li>number of accredited farmers/land managers</li> </ul>	All
	First Nations capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Nation organisations are embedded within commercial land management opportunities</li> <li>First Nations communities have meaningful access to Country</li> </ul>	P
	Economic efficiency of water use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gross value irrigated agricultural product (\$ / ML) water use</li> </ul>	W
Localised reduction in threats	Regional water balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water use within sustainable limits</li> </ul>	W
	Water flow conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low flows</li> <li>number of flow days</li> <li>number of zones meeting environmental water provision thresholds</li> </ul>	W
	Water quality downstream of urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water flow regime stability and water quality</li> </ul>	W
	Water quality in priority catchments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>composite - DOC, Turbidity, Nx</li> </ul>	W
	Pest animal impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number (or %) of landholders concerned about landscape health</li> <li>regional status - # detection reports + time period from detection to removal</li> </ul>	L
	Groundwater aquifer levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groundwater level in aquifer</li> </ul>	W
	Groundwater salinity within sustainable limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salinity of groundwater across aquifer</li> </ul>	W
	Weed impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number (or %) of landholders concerned about landscape health</li> </ul>	L
	Coastal dune and offshore habitats - mitigation of threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hectares improved</li> </ul>	N
Priority high-value habitats - mitigation of threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hectares improved</li> </ul>	N	

## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

	Indicator	Metrics	
Improved regional landscape health	Priority weeds eradicated	• number of regional priority weeds successfully eradicated from region	L
	Regional weed status	• weed rating	L
	Regional pest status	• pest rating	L
	Soil acidity in risk zones	• hectare extent and severity	L
	Soil carbon	• soil carbon in production areas	L
	Waterway health	• native fish distribution, abundance and species richness • invertebrate - species composition	W
	Reef and seagrass extent and condition	• seagrass cover within sampling sites	N
	Wetland extent	• hectares	N
	Native vegetation extent	• hectares	N
	Priority habitat extent	• hectares in priority high-value habitats (low rainfall grassy woodlands, heathland, swamps and riparian vegetation)	N
	Threatened ecosystem status	• percentage of priority threatened ecological communities with stable or improved condition	N
	Threatened species status and trend	• percentage of priority threatened species with stable or improved population trajectory	N
	Land-related emissions	• tonnes CO <sub>2</sub>	C



Interested to learn more and see our progress?

Please visit our website to view our:

- Annual Achievements Report
- Statutory Annual Report
- Program information
- Snapshots of the condition of the region

## **Connect with us**

Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board

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*We work on Kurna, Peramangk and  
Ngarrindjeri Yerta/Ruwe*

*Always was, always will be*