The EP NRM Board is committed to working with our many partners and volunteers to maximise good natural resource management efforts throughout the region.

**Natural Resources Management Act 2004**

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

I, .............................................., Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, 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 2016-2019, volume of the Eyre Peninsula Regional Natural Resources Management Plan.

Hon Ian Hunter
MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
Date: / /
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The region</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic priorities for the region</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board investment 2016-19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, Water and Wildlife</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study – Successful Green Army</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14 Achievements</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study – From Paddock to Plate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study – Eyre Peninsula Goanna Watch</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and accountability</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study – Pest Management Plans for Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Physical Resources</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Funding</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on NRM Levies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board is pleased to present its 2016-19 Business Plan which we are confident will strengthen our region’s sustainability into the future. During 2015/16, we will see the completion of both our Water Allocation Plan and the Natural Resources Management Plan (our Strategic Plan.) Following strong input from our community, these documents will stand us in really good stead as we partner with others to build resilience into our natural systems, and our community, through the life of this Business Plan.

At the overarching level, we are strongly committed to being a part of the state’s economic future with continued commitment to sustainable primary production, ensuring healthy soils, marine environments, and healthy eco-systems. Our communities are better placed to be resilient and thrive into the future with good natural resource management in place.

To achieve this, we will work closely with key partners in the region: industry groups, businesses, local government and individuals. We also have strong partnerships with the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and Regional Development Australia, Whyalla and EP. Our agreement to work together in rolling out the Eyre Peninsula Climate Change Adaptation Plan is just one such example of that strong partnership.

Our work in managing pest plant and animals, strengthening biodiversity with vegetation linkages, managing our prescribed water resources, promoting sustainable agriculture practices and education programs will continue. Around these activities, we are also seeing the development of Pest Management Plans which will cover a variety of species, as well as broadening our monitoring activities in resource efficient ways.

In preparing our three year Business Plan, it has been important to ensure our financial resources will enable us to fund our work. Recently, we have seen some costs previously covered for us by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR), finally passing on to the Board and, coupled with the development of new Plans, it has been timely to review our funding partnerships. We continue to rely on our community’s levy funds, both the land and water levies, as well as being able to leverage those funds with Australian Government partnership funds. Our biodiversity conservation work, plus our aboriginal engagement program, have been mostly funded by Australian Government funding which will cease in 2017/18. We will be seeking replacement funding sources from various partners.

We will continue to run community forums around a variety of topics, to build our citizen’s science capacity, to offer targeted grants as well as carry out the work required of us under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004. However, the board is fully aware that our partnerships with the community are vital and we acknowledge that our community integrates the management of natural resources into their everyday lives. Volunteer works have been integral to our programs as well and have resulted in our healthy country and our healthy communities.

Our Board looks forward to again working alongside our regional community with this plan.

Diana Laube
Presiding Member
Eyre Peninsula NRM Board
Managing our natural resources is a balance between the tools of conservation and sustainable practices. An integrated approach to management also considers social, economic and cultural values and aspirations.

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 & industry groups.

The Board has specific roles and responsibilities under the NRM Act (2004). One of those responsibilities is to develop a regional Natural Resources Management (NRM) Plan. The Eyre Peninsula NRM Plan was adopted by the Minister in May 2009. 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 Board pursues five goals aligned with the vision:

1. Healthy and productive natural resources and natural systems
2. Using and managing natural resources with environmental constraints
3. Progressive and vibrant communities and industries valuing our natural resources and actively participating
4. Effective partnerships based on sound knowledge driving natural resources management
5. An accountable, ethical, progressive and honest organisation.

The EP NRM Plan consists of five volumes as shown below. This document is an update “Investing in our resources” for the period 2016-19 and is referred to as the Business Plan. It considers emerging issues, current priorities for investment and builds on previous achievements.
The Region

The Eyre Peninsula region covers about 80,000 square km. Native vegetation covers about 44% of the land mass and more than half of the region is farmed. The major economic drivers in the region are agriculture, aquaculture, commercial fishing, mining and tourism.

The population of about 55 thousand is spread along the coastline, which is some 2,475 km in length, and throughout inland areas. The region has a unique mix of urban and rural communities. Over half of the population lives in the two cities of Whyalla and Port Lincoln. About 5.5% of the population is of Aboriginal descent (1.6% across SA). EP has 11 local government authorities and small amounts of outside council areas.

Figure 1. The Eyre Peninsula NRM Region
Strategic priorities for the region

The Strategic Plan (Volume 1) is under revision during 2016-17. The current Plan has four major goals, each with long term targets and intermediate outcomes (Appendix 1). The revision may result in an adjustment of goals and targets to address current and emerging issues and to ensure that progress can be reliably measured.

The Board has a number of new and ongoing priorities that are critical to improving the resilience of Eyre Peninsula’s natural resources and communities:

- **Community involvement** in natural resources management (NRM) is central to the Board’s success. The Board’s on-ground activities are mostly delivered through the Board, community and industry groups. This business plan will provide increased opportunities for regional communities to participate in NRM activities through various community forums for planning and management of natural resources, citizen science projects and targeted grants.

- **Working with farmers** and land managers to improve sustainable production as well as generate biodiversity outcomes is a priority for the Board.

- **Water** is an essential resource for environmental, social and economic prosperity. It needs to be managed using the most current information, with prescribed water resources managed in accordance to an endorsed Water Allocation Plan (WAP). Completion, adoption and implementation of the new water allocation plan (WAP) is a priority from 2016-19.

- Eyre Peninsula is fortunate to have large areas of intact **native vegetation**. Strengthening linkages between vegetation patches is an accepted strategy to improve resilience and provide time and space for ecosystems and species to adapt to disturbances such as drought, fire and climate change.

- The Board will increase efforts to **work with industries and local governments** to minimise impacts on natural resources and balance the needs of development and environment through supporting activities such as stormwater and catchment water management.

- **Our coast and marine** environments are under continual pressure from development, increased use and the introduction of pest species. In coming years it will be vital that these environments continue to be sustainably managed for economic and ecological benefits and continued enjoyment by our residents, visitors and thriving seafood industry.

BELOW: Multi award winning rain-garden in Coffin Bay town centre, an important part of the towns’ stormwater management system.
This three year Business Plan sets out the high-level actions to implement priorities and achieve management action targets. Table 1 and Figure 2 identify expenditure and expected revenue for each program and sub-program.

This business plan covers a three year period from 2016 to 2019. The next review will occur for the 2019/20 plan unless there are significant changes to either funding or investment priorities during the preceding years. In this case, the Board will revise the plan prior to 2019/20 and re-consult with the community.

The design and content of the Business Plan as well as the Board’s program structure were reviewed in 2014. The objective was to improve the document so that it is succinct, easily readable and can be used as a communication document. As a result, the Board’s 10 programs and 31 sub-programs shown in previous business plans have been aggregated into four overarching programs and ten sub-programs.

The four programs are naturally interconnected. For example, community engagement cuts across all programs. It is integral to land, water and wildlife and farming projects as well as monitoring condition of natural resources; activities to manage threats from pest plants and animals form part of biodiversity and farming projects, and also community engagement as volunteer groups are involved in controlling feral species such as foxes and priority weeds.

![Figure 1. Revised program and sub program structure](image-url)
Expenditure

This Business Plan sets out the programs and actions that will be funded by the Board to contribute to the implementation of the targets of the Strategic Plan. It describes the expenditure and expected revenue for the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19.

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.

In the 2015-16 State budget, the South Australian Government announced that it will partially recover the costs of Water Planning and Management (WPM) activities through regional NRM levies. This move reflects the Government’s commitments under the National Water Initiative to recover WPM costs on an “impactor pays” basis. An impactor is defined as a beneficiary of the WPM activity, or someone that causes the WPM activity to be undertaken.

WPM activities are activities undertaken by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and include water licensing, compliance activities, science to support the development and management of water resources, support to the NRM Regions for the review and amendment of water allocation plans, and debt recovery. The eight regional NRM Boards are to collect WPM costs totalling $3.5M in 2015/16, $6.7M in 2016/17 and indexed in future years.

In addition to this WPM cost recovery amount, there are also a range of increased costs for the Board for 2016/17 and beyond. These include changes to the way corporate support is provided and associated costs recovered by DEWNR from NRM Boards.

In 2015/16, the Board implemented a range of short-term saving strategies to cover these additional costs, minimising the immediate impacts on water users, NRM programs and the community, without raising the levies.

In 2016/17, the Eyre Peninsula will need to raise an additional $520,000 revenue from levies to cover these costs and continue to deliver programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Sub Program</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
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<td>Coast and marine</td>
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<td>432</td>
<td>436</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pest plants and animals</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>596</td>
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<td>Farming</td>
<td>Sustainable farming</td>
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<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Community and industry engagement</td>
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<td>703</td>
<td>717</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal engagement</td>
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<td>509</td>
<td>514</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership and accountability</td>
<td>Planning, strategy and governance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitoring and improvement</td>
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<td>Total Expenditure</td>
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<td>4,871</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Existing funding agreements will expire in year 2 – alternative funding may be identified

*Includes Adapt NRM Grant program, which is subject to approval for years 2 and 3

*Aboriginal engagement is largely funded through Australian Government

*Planning, strategy and governance includes additional WPM and corporate cost impacts, as well as the establishment on ongoing levy collection costs associated with local government collection of the Division 1 levy funds
Land, water and wildlife

This program encompasses management of landscapes, water, native plants and animals, pest plants and animals and coastal and marine environments. Large landscape scale projects such as WildEyre work across land tenures and land systems. Actions in coastal areas are guided by the Boards’ Coastal Action Plan and focus on reducing the impact of human activities on species and the integrity of coastal habitats.

Work to reduce the impact of pest plants and animals is prioritised based on species-specific management plans and once endorsed by the Minister, the new water allocation plan will provide a framework for the management of essential water resources.

Case Study: Successful Green Army

In partnership with the City of Port Lincoln Council, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula hosted one of the first Green Army’s on Eyre Peninsula.

The Green Army Program is a skills development initiative that was rolled out by the Australian Government for young adults having an interest in natural resource management.

The local Green Army team consisting of eight 17-24 year olds, assisted NREP with re-vegetation and habitat restoration projects, construction of herbivore proof fencing and controlling weeds as part of the Australian Government funded Green Army initiative on Lower Eyre Peninsula.

One of their many significant achievements involved the construction of 2km’s of herbivore proof fence to enclose 15 hectares of previously cleared land at Point Donington in Lincoln National Park.

The completion of this fence enables opportunities for community volunteer and school groups to be involved in environmental restoration in Lincoln National Park. The President of the Friends of Southern Eyre Parks, Jim Egan worked with the Green Army and complimented the team’s supervisor, Mr Bizewski and his Green Army for their dedication.

“It was great to have this team of enthusiastic and energetic young people for the hard yakka on the fence construction and weed clearing. Their work has set this area of the Park up for natural regeneration and replanting, to restore it to something like its original condition.”

“Also, I would like to thank the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board for funding the fencing materials and revegetation, said Mr. Egan”

Senior Natural Resources Officer, Seb Drewer says the Green Army’s achievements added value to the EPNRM Board’s National Landcare Program, funded Ecosystems and Coastal Management project. The Green Army team has also been working on beach access improvement, track rationalisation and maintenance, shorebird monitoring, rabbit warren mapping, revegetation, marine debris surveys, seed collection and weed control at more than 20 locations on Lower Eyre Peninsula.
Achievements

Other notable achievements

- 115 Water Affecting Activities (WAA) enquiries received
- 26 Water Affecting Activities (WAA) permits assessed and approved
- 1,436kg of rabbit baits laid throughout the region
- 5,000 dingo baits laid in the Western District
- More than 6,140km of roads surveyed for Buffel grass, African lovegrass Fountain grass and other invasive Pennisetum grass species throughout the region, with over 100 sites managed
- The effects of biocontrol agents on bridal creeper, Horehound and Salvation Jane has had widespread results
- Bio-control agent for Engelmann prickly pear was released at a site near Cowell
- A new plant eating beetle Leptinotarsa texana from South Africa to be introduced for testing as a bio-control of Silverleaf Nightshade in Australia, as a direct result of research undertaken by regional staff
- 2020 Shorebird and Hooded Plover surveys completed around the EP Coastline.
- Over 140 water tests completed in the Port Lincoln Office, this does not include regional offices.
- Together with Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula (RDAWEP) the Board has funded the development of a Coastal Access and Off-road vehicle strategy for the Eyre Peninsula, which will commence with initial stakeholder in November 2015.
Farming

This program addresses key Natural Resources Management issues relating to soil condition and health and water use efficiency. Fifty five percent of the Eyre Peninsula’s land area is farmed. Improved farm practices that incorporate new technologies to protect and enhance soils whilst improving profitability and risk management strategies, and managing land to its productive capability will contribute to the long term viability of farming on the EP.

Case Study: From Paddock to Plate

Understanding soils and food production is a significant element of year 9 geography studies in biomes. Students from Port Lincoln High School sought the opportunity to learn about soils and food production from local farming systems group, Lower Eyre Peninsula Agricultural Development Association.

The program concept, Paddock to Plate, enabled students to follow the value chain, visiting farms to understand the importance of soils and crop production, through to grain harvesting and marketing, then milling and food production.

The interaction between students and Lower EP farmers and agribusiness also built a great understanding and potential interest in students to pursue careers in agriculture and agricultural sciences.
Achievements

Over 600 farmers were engaged in the past 12 months through a range of workshops, small group meetings, one on one advice and field days.

10 sheep group meetings across the region, focusing on livestock health and land management issues – 50 farmers involved

14 agricultural groups were supported with funding totalling $48,890. Projects ranged from supporting local and state conferences, local field days, expo’s and technology workshops to undertaking soil management demonstrations.

4 Sheeted catchment YouTube videos were produced.

Other notable achievements

- 9 Future Farm Landscapes farming businesses meet every 6 months to review the trials and demonstrations established to fill the knowledge gaps and learn from each other how they have managed to reduce the risks to profitability.

- 2 soil acidity workshops supported, highlighting the extent of acidic soils in the region, surveillance and testing results.

- Over 600 farmers were engaged through a range of workshops, small group meetings, one on one advice and field days.
  - 14 Stickybeak days – over 350 farmers engaged with NRM.
  - Young Leader group workshop held – 15 farmers.
  - 2 x Chemical Resistance Weed workshops supported – over 200 farmers – in partnership with LEADA and EPARF.
  - 2 x LEADA & EPARF field days supported – 170 farmers engaged.

- Sustainable Agriculture & Regional Landcare Facilitators supporting farmer groups (Ag Bureau, LEADA & EPARF).

- Supporting regional and state-wide sustainable agriculture projects, such as Grain and Graze, Australian Government Action On Ground and National Landcare Program, SheepConnect SA, New Horizons and the Grains Research and Development corporation projects (e.g. stubble management) – ensuring sharing of information, knowledge and best practice examples with EP farmers.
Engagement

The Board has an extensive range of stakeholders. This program aims to communicate effectively, build community, Board and staff knowledge of NRM through knowledge and information exchange, and support volunteer groups to achieve their objectives. The Board uses a range of strategies to support participation of Aboriginal people in natural resources management projects.

This program includes a burgeoning citizen science program, which has potential for application across delivery programs and projects, particularly in the Land, Water and Wildlife Program. In this way, community members become involved in measuring resource condition and actively contributing to management.

Case Study: Eyre Peninsula Goanna Watch

Echidna and goanna expert, Dr Peggy Rismiller, visited Eyre Peninsula in October 2014 to present a series of field walks and a community information evening at Coffin Bay hosted by Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula.

About 50 people attended the Coffin Bay talk and almost everyone in attendance had seen goannas locally, while very few people present had seen an echidna.

Natural Resources Coastal Officer Kerryn McEwan said Dr Rismiller presented a fascinating insight into the daily lives and survival challenges of echidnas and goannas.

“She presented some rare images of echidna and goanna young and juveniles, and a recent photo of a goanna eating a dead snake at the Coffin Bay boat ramp,” she said.

Dr Rismiller led interesting nature walks in Lincoln and Coffin Bay National Parks, where populations of Rosenberg’s goanna have bounced back since the commencement of an intensive feral predator control program in 1996.

Rosenberg’s goanna, used to occur all around the southern edge of Australia, from Perth to Sydney, but now is largely extinct on mainland Australia. However the recovery of the species in the parks on lower Eyre Peninsula has brought optimism about their mainland survival.

It is hoped that Dr Rismiller’s information will provide the community with the identification skills that will enable them to identify a Rosenberg’s goanna and a Sand goanna, the two most prevalent species that live on Eyre Peninsula.

Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula plans to continue raising goanna awareness in the community in 2015/16 with the installation of goanna caution road signs in the national parks and by launching a new website where community members will be able to use their new goanna identification skills to record their sightings on Eyre Peninsula.
Achievements

12 Port Lincoln High School students in Aboriginal Ranger Cadetship (ARC) to achieve Certificate 2 and 3 in Conservation and Land Management

Schools supported across all districts; with over 350 students engaged in a range of natural resources initiatives

Citizen science initiative continues to grow, with over 100 citizen scientists involved in bird monitoring and the launch of the new Goanna Watch strategy

Over 600 farmers were engaged through a range of workshops, small group meetings, one on one advice and field days.

Other notable achievements

- 11 YouTube videos to raise awareness about our programs of sustainable agriculture, aboriginal engagement and marine parks; and the importance of natural resources to our livelihoods and lifestyles (Love EP)
- Working in partnership with the oyster industry in Coffin Bay on marine debris management. Staff assisted oyster growers both in the marine debris clean up, as well as in the production of maps designating search areas.
- 1 x full time Aboriginal trainee and 2 x Aboriginal school based Trainee positions.
- Aboriginal Workforce stable at 10% – additional 10 Aboriginal people employed through contracts.
- 1st round of Weena Mooga (Aboriginal women) small grants for big ideas run.
- Boneseed sites in the Eastern District have all been controlled with the help of the Aboriginal Partnerships staff. Almost all sites showed a 40% reduction on previous years.
- New NREP website platform and new content, ensuring timely and relevant information to the community
Leadership and accountability

The Board is the primary entity in the region with responsibilities for management of natural resources. It has a range of statutory requirements with respect to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The Board is guided by the principles of good governance to ensure it operates with integrity, openness, accountability, consideration of risks, efficiency and considers the views and aspirations of its community.

A proportion of project funds are invested in monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The Board is committed to refining its monitoring and evaluation strategy and reviewing targets to ensure they are measurable and relevant to desired outcomes. The Board is increasingly involving community groups and individuals in development of strategic plans and undertaking surveys to collect monitoring data information under the guidance of field staff.

Case Study – Pest Management Plans for Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula.

The Eyre Peninsula Regional NRM Plan provides a high level framework for the control of pests in the region. The development of specific pest management plans provides NREP staff with regionally consistent and equitable management objectives and strategies at the operational level, and the EP community with an increased level of transparency and understanding of the Board’s pest management agenda.

Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula have developed the first 12 pest management plans, which were provided to the EP community and external pest management agencies for a consultative period. Subsequently, the pest plans were endorsed by the EPNRM Board.

These pest management plans enable a targeted approach to pest management at the District level. Districts are currently identifying priority assets in which to target funding and engaging with local community groups as they implement on ground actions.

Plans for the following pest species have been completed:

- **Pest Plants:** Boxthorn, Bridal Creeper, Bridal Veil, Boneseed, Khaki weed, Gorse and Silverleaf Nightshade.
- **Pest Animal:** European Rabbit, Red Fox, Dingo, Feral Deer and Feral Goat.

The emphasis of these plans varies between pest species with some isolated outbreaks to be destroyed, while more widespread and well established pest species could have objectives based on protecting significant environmental and agricultural assets, or potentially supporting a community driven pest control program.

Plans for an additional eight pest species are well underway and are expected to be completed by mid-2016.
Achievements

Aboriginal Advisory Committee continues to provide valuable input into NRM Planning and Aboriginal engagement in the region

2 young EP farmers sponsored to attend Innovation Generation Conference in Canberra

6 Climate change adaptation and mitigation projects funded

3 year commitment to Eyre Peninsula Integrated Climate Change Agreement

Other notable achievements

- Work commenced on the new NRM Plan
  - 18 regional workshops held to identify community priorities and opportunities
  - 65 personal interviews undertaken to capture key stakeholders perspectives
  - Online survey completed capturing places of value across the region
  - Applied a sub-regional planning approach and developed five draft sub-regional descriptions

- Ongoing partnerships, collaboration and development of strategic initiatives with
  - Local Government and the Regional Development Australia, Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula
  - Lower Eyre Agricultural Development Association (LEADA)
  - Eyre Peninsula Agricultural Research Foundation (EPARF)
  - Farming systems group, agricultural bureaus and Landcare groups

- Signing of the new, 3 year, Eyre Peninsula Integrated Climate Change Agreement (EPICCA) to ensure continued momentum in Climate Change.

- Release of the new Adapt NRM Grant program, which resulted in six projects being supported to progress climate change adaptation and mitigation activities.
Staff and physical resources

South Australia’s NRM Boards deliver their priorities, policies and programs via a partnership with the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR). For the Board, this means DEWNR, 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 Manager for Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula is responsible for the development of an Annual Implementation Plan between DEWNR and the Board. The Regional Manager will be accountable for delivering the endorsed annual implementation plan. Working with the Board to oversee delivery through the regional workforce that delivers both DEWNR and Board programs. There are 29.12 FTE staff funded by the Board for the 2016-17 financial year and the FTE numbers will be similar for the two subsequent years.

The Board does not intend to acquire new physical resources, infrastructure or land during the 2016-19 period.

Aside from DEWNR, 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.

The establishment of DEWNR and integration of service delivery at a regional level creates an identity through a single regional face for environment, water and natural resources management services and an integrated NRM workforce.
Sources of funding (income)

The Board receives funds from a range of sources to implement the strategies and actions described in the Business Plan as detailed in Table 2. 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 2. Sources of funding

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<th>Funding Source</th>
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<td>Other State Agency funding</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal and Pest control</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,750</strong></td>
<td><strong>5924</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,777</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,871</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Proportion of total funding received from each source in 2016-17

1 This table does not show the funding that the State Government (DEWNR) provides to support management of Natural Resources EP, coordinating volunteers, and 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 levy income in 2017/18 and 2018/19 is based on a 3% increase on 2016/17.

3 Income decreases in future years due to current projects funded by the Australian Government being completed. It is anticipated that the Board will apply for future funding as opportunities from Australian Government programs become available.
Information on NRM levies

The types of NRM levies

The Natural Resources Management Act 2004 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 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 Act, and
- **Division 2** – NRM water levy – Section 101 of the 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 significant, additional government funding to greatly increase the volume of work that can be accomplished in our region.

Basis and rates of the Levy

Under the NRM Act, each NRM Board defines the most appropriate basis and rates for regional NRM land and water levies, taking into account specific matters of importance for each region. The Board considered the options available for increasing the income raised from the land and water levies to meet the increasing budget requirements. In order to take a strategic approach and in response to feedback from stakeholders, the Board resolved to also consider the basis of the land and water levies as a part of formulating this draft Business Plan.

Regional NRM Land Levy

The NRM Act provides the following options as the basis for calculating the regional NRM land 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 setting the regional NRM levy under section 95(3) (a) of the NRM Act, the Board undertook an investigation in 2015-16 to determine the appropriate basis for the collection of the levies and an assessment of the social and economic impact of levies. In assessing the merits of alternative methods for the levy basis, the Board considered the options listed above.

The Board has determined that (pursuant to section 95 (3)(a)(ii) of the NRM Act) a fixed charge of an amount that depends on the purpose for which rateable land is used (option 3, above) will be the basis for determining the regional NRM land levy in 2016/17 to 2018/19. This is a change to the basis of the land levy, which has been a fixed charge (option 2) in previous years. A land levy based on the purpose for which the rateable land is used is viewed as having stronger alignment with a ‘beneficiary pays’ principle than option 2 (larger properties that receive greater NRM benefits pay more).

While the ‘equity and shared responsibility’ principles are important in choosing a basis for determining the regional NRM levy, there is no practical way to accurately assess the benefits that individual landholders across the region would derive from the activities and services of the Board. The Board’s objective is to manage the region’s natural resources for the benefit of everyone who lives in the region.

This change in the basis of the levy will be applied to all local government areas within the Eyre Peninsula, however it excludes a small amount of properties that are outside of council areas, which will remain at the fixed charge per rateable property (Option 2).

The total amount of income collected from the NRM land levy will be increased by 3% per annum in 2017/18 and 2018/19 from the new increased levy revenue to be established in 2016/17.

Levy rates and collection from Local Government

The levy rate applicable to Outside Council Areas will be based on one fixed cost per rateable property, which will be $79.00 per rateable assessment for 2016-17.

The levy rate applicable to local government areas within the region will be calculated by using the following steps:

- **Step 1** – Determine the total Division 1 (land) Levy for the region to be collected by Local Government for the Board – the full quantum is determined through the Board annual budgeting process
- **Step 2** – Split the total quantum in line with the impact distribution percentages that have been approved by the Board
- **Step 3** – Divide the sub-total for each land use purpose by the number of actual rateable properties for each land use, to determine the fixed rate per assessment
- **Step 4** – Multiply the number of rateable properties in each category, within each council area, by the fixed rate for each land use purpose, and add all category figures together, to determine the overall Levy quantum for each council area.
Table 3 provides approximate calculations for steps 1 to 3, and the estimate results for step 4 are detailed in Table 4.

### Table 3: Estimated levy per land use purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact distribution %</th>
<th>Quantum per land use category</th>
<th>Total No. of properties per land use</th>
<th>Levy per rateable land use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>58% 1,537,000</td>
<td>24,044</td>
<td>63.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>9% 238,500</td>
<td>1,937</td>
<td>123.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>1% 26,500</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>104.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Producers</td>
<td>28% 742,000</td>
<td>3,287</td>
<td>225.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other &amp; Vacant land</td>
<td>4% 106,000</td>
<td>3,937</td>
<td>26.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,650,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Estimated NRM (land) Levy contribution, establishment and collection costs per local government region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Region</th>
<th>Regional Land Levy Contribution ($ 2016/17)</th>
<th>Council establishment fee ($)</th>
<th>Council Collection fee ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Ceduna</td>
<td>161,493</td>
<td>11,460</td>
<td>3,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Cleve</td>
<td>114,648</td>
<td>10,899</td>
<td>2,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Ellioton</td>
<td>100,186</td>
<td>10,823</td>
<td>2,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Franklin Harbour</td>
<td>108,264</td>
<td>10,898</td>
<td>2,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Kimba</td>
<td>75,028</td>
<td>10,557</td>
<td>2,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula</td>
<td>373,640</td>
<td>12,541</td>
<td>3,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Port Lincoln</td>
<td>546,731</td>
<td>15,579</td>
<td>4,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Streaky Bay</td>
<td>146,578</td>
<td>11,322</td>
<td>3,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Tumby Bay</td>
<td>200,814</td>
<td>11,407</td>
<td>3,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whyalla</td>
<td>742,794</td>
<td>17,803</td>
<td>5,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council of Wudinna</td>
<td>79,825</td>
<td>10,613</td>
<td>2,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total quantum (local government areas only)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,650,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>133,903</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,681</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Council areas</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total quantum (including outside council areas)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,688,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>133,903</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,681</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the Levy $ per rateable property is an indicative dollar value depending upon rates and remissions calculated by the councils.

As the Board is changing the basis of the land levy, under the NRM Act councils can claim an establishment fee in 2016/17 (in addition to the collection fees) to assist councils to modify their collection methods. Consistent with the Natural Resources Management (Financial Provisions) Regulations 2005, a council seeking to recover any costs with respect to a particular financial year should, as a preliminary step, provide to the relevant regional NRM board a reasonable estimate of the costs that the council expects to claim:

(a) as establishment costs (if relevant); and

(b) as ongoing costs.

Where contiguous land holdings are owned and occupied by the same person or non-contiguous land is farmed as a single enterprise, the combined land holdings be regarded as a single piece of rateable land for NRM levy purposes.

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation collects the regional NRM levy from out of the District council areas.
NRM Water Levy

The NRM Act specifies the options for determining a NRM Water Levy that can be applied to the holders of water licences in prescribed water resources areas. The levy may include one or more of these components in any combination:

- **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.

Based on the principles of fairness, efficiency and governance established by the Board and the investigations undertaken in developing the regional NRM Plan, 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.

There is a potential benefit from holding an allocation even if it is not used. As well as the value of taking and using of water, allocations have a capital value as water can be used to generate income. This value is partly determined by current use but can also be influenced by other factors (e.g. the relative scarcity of water elsewhere).

The overall NRM water levy will decrease from $455,685 in 2015/16 to $434,782 in 2016/17 from water licence holders in the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas (PWAs) as shown in Table 5. This decrease is a result of the following changes:

- **Reticulated Water supply**
  - The levy rate for reticulated water has been increased by 3% from the previous year.
  - The size of allocation has reduced - SA Water, in consideration of the sustainable extraction of water for the Eyre Peninsula have surrendered a range of water allocations in the Musgrave Prescribed Wells Area, which has reduced the amount of water available.
  - This will result in the levy quantum for this category dropping from $436,177 in 2015/16 to $359,118 in 2016/17.
- **Community Water**
  - The water levy for 2015/16 was negatively impacted by the ERD Court Decision to allocate 436 ML of additional water to a mining company. As a result of this, the pool of water doubled, in effect discounting the levy rate for this category by 50% (e.g. the price should have $2.30KL in 2015-16, however the rate dropped to $1.15KL).
  - In 2016/17 the Board have removed the additional allocation from this pool, which has resulted in the rate returning to the original 2015/16 level and have increased the quantum by 3%
- **Energy and Minerals Sector**
  - The 436ML allocation has been moved from Community Water to this new levy category
  - For parity the rate has been set at the same level as reticulated water, with a 3% increase.
  - The energy and minerals sector water levy will be applied to all future commercial operations under the Mining Act 1971 and the Petroleum Act 2000.
- **These rates will increase by 3% per annum in 2017/18 and 2018/19.**
- **A landholder may be required to pay a regional NRM levy and an NRM water based levy.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Recommended Levy rate (cents per kL allocated)</th>
<th>Total NRM water levy quantum($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing a reticulated water supply</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>359,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes other than providing a reticulated water supply – community water</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>5,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes other than providing a reticulated water supply – energy and minerals sector</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>18,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>434,782</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 the NRM levies. A Social Impact Assessment prepared by EconSearch Pty Ltd (October 2015) 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.

Guide for impacts

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

### Impact of NRM Levies

<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>

Using the fixed charge of an amount that depends on the purpose for which the land is used, the assessment found that the land 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.

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.

In regard to the 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.

Water Affecting Activities

Water affecting activities are described in the Caring for our resources (volume of the EPNRM Plan). The approach favours education, awareness raising, voluntary compliance and incentives to raise the standard of natural resources management supported by a range of legislative tools within the Natural Resources Management Act 2004.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board and DEWNR have some long established monitoring projects and data sets to monitor the state and condition of the natural resources and related trends on EP. 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

**Goal 1**
Healthy and productive natural resources and natural systems

A. Land conditioning is maintained and improved, and risks to land degradation are reduced from 2009 levels

B. Terrestrial and marine ecosystems (including threatened plants and animals) are maintained and/or increased in distribution, condition and connectivity from 2009 levels

C. Water regimes are maintained at levels that sustain significant water dependant ecosystems while allowing for use by community and industry requirements within sustainable limits

D. Water quality in surface water, groundwater and marine water resources is maintained and improved to meet the Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2003 standards

E. Productive capacity of natural resource dependent industries is managed and developed within ecosystem capability and constraints of a changing climate

F. The Eyre Peninsula community has increased awareness and understanding of NRM, is engaged in managing natural resources and supports other natural resource users from 2009 levels

G. NRM knowledge is obtained, shared and coordinated for all NRM stakeholders

**Goal 2**
Using and managing natural resources within environmental constraints

A. 1. Water and wind erosion protection indices are increased to 326 days by 2014.

A. 2. Soil cover on non-arable land is maintained or increased from 2009 levels.

A. 3. Water use efficiency of agricultural crops and pastures is improved by at least 10% by 2014.

A. 4. Pests and diseases are decreased from current (2009) distribution, abundance and impact and new incursions are detected early and eradicated.

B. 1. 20,000 ha of native ecosystems are managed in priority linkage areas by 2014.

B. 2. 1250 ha of native ecosystems are re-established in priority ecosystem linkage areas by 2014.

B. 3. Remnant native vegetation, significant watercourses and marine and coastal attributes are improved in condition from 2009 levels.

B. 4. Impacts of known major pest and diseases on native terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems are decreased from 2009 distributions.

B. 5. 10 threatened plant & animal species are managed according to recovery & action plans by 2014.

C. 1. Priority aquifers in Southern Basins and Mungrave prescribed resources are managed to improve the integrity of the resource and the priority ecosystem that depend on them.

C. 2. Flow regimes within significant catchments are managed to meet the requirements of water dependant ecosystems and sustainable use.

C. 3. Innovative water use practices and technologies are continually adopted.

D. 1. Land based impacts on water quality are reduced from 2009 levels are managed to improve the integrity of the resource and the priority ecosystem that depend on them.

D. 2. Surface water and groundwater salinity levels are maintained within natural variability and are not adversely affected by localised water extraction.

D. 3. Diffuse and point source pollution discharges into all waters are reduced from 2009 levels.

E. 1. Regional barriers and risks to sustainable production from changing environmental conditions are better understood and communicated by 2014.

E. 2. Adaptive, innovative & productive farming systems are implemented in a responsive climate.

E. 3. Aquaculture production is managed to minimise impacts on coast and marine ecosystems.

E. 4. Mining activities are managed for minimal environmental impacts on terrestrial & aquatic ecosystems.

E. 5. Tourism ventures are developed to be eco-friendly and to enhance knowledge of natural resources.

F. 1. Community has increased knowledge and skills to manage natural resources sustainability by 2014

F. 2. Community involvement in NRM activities is increased by 2014

F. 3. Community based groups and/or volunteers and landowners are supported, promoted and acknowledged for their actions on NRM activities

F. 4. The relationship between NRM and Aboriginal culture and heritage is widely understood, acknowledged and communicated to natural resources managers

F. 5. Eyre Peninsula Aboriginal communities are included as natural resources managers and are supported and engaged in NRM activities

G. 1. Cooperative cross-institutional arrangements are maintained and increased from 2009 levels

G. 2. Knowledge of our natural resource condition is monitored, evaluated, reported and promoted in a coordinated, regional manner

G. 3. Research is conducted & shared to address NRM knowledge gaps and inform decision making

G. 4. Aboriginal & local knowledge of NRM is acquired and incorporated into NRM decision making

**Goal 3**
Progressive and vibrant communities and industries valuing our natural resources and actively participating

**Goal 4**
Effective partnerships based on sound knowledge driving natural resources management

**Goal 5**
An accountable ethical, progressive and honest organisation