

# **Northern and Yorke Regional Climate Change Sector Agreement Report**

**June 2023**

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This report is presented to meet the reporting requirements of the Yorke and Mid North Regional Sector Agreement pursuant to the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*.

Submitted on behalf of the Northern and Yorke Alliance by:

**Simon Millcock**

CEO Legatus Group

Date 22 July 2023

## Executive Summary

The following key actions from the sector agreement update to 30 June 2023.

| Ref | Detailed action areas   | Update  |
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| 1.  | <p>Regional Coastal Management Action Plan (CMAP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a range of small-scale environmental works in partnership with coastal councils to progress priorities of CMAP.</li> <li>• Develop a large scale, multi-year collaborative project application under the Landscape Priorities Fund to implement priority actions identified in the CMAP.</li> <li>• Through the CMAP identify opportunities and funding to support the Adelaide Plains Council Natural and Coastal Areas Management Plan 2016 which details strategies to manage sea level rise impacts on coastal areas and retreat opportunities for vegetation communities.</li> </ul> | <p>\$980k of funding has been accessed by NY Landscape Board through the SA Landscape Priority Funds for a 3 year project <b>Resilient Coastal Ecosystems on YP and Gulf</b>, (Djulda-wawa Badja), developed and being delivered in partnership with coastal councils, community and Narungga as well as industry Partner AGL. Focussing on the coast in the vicinity of the Walk the Yorke Trail, the project aims to help increase the resilience of coastal ecosystems. has many components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations Ranger employment</li> <li>• 145 hectares of revegetation and weed control aimed to create buffers for some of the remnant vegetation on the narrow coastal strip</li> <li>• Support for SYP Community Hub revegetating areas damaged by Yorketown Fire</li> <li>• Pilot project to formalise camping in council managed coastal crown land</li> <li>• Development of Coastal Access Strategy for visitor management.</li> <li>• Building Osprey nesting platforms.</li> <li>• Interpretative signage and promotional media campaign.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/projects/djulda-wawa-badja">https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/projects/djulda-wawa-badja</a></p> <p>The Nature Conservancy has secured \$2.9 million from the Federal Government to deliver the <b>Blue Carbon Project</b>, over 3 years, along sections of the Adelaide Plains Council coastline.</p> <p><a href="#">media statement</a></p> <p>The project will be delivered in partnership with DEW, Landscape Board, council, Greening Australia and a range of others with the aim of reintroducing tidal flows to previously isolated sections of the coast. This will allow regeneration of samphire and swamps in support of retreat of these “at risk” vegetation communities from the impacts of rising sea levels.</p> |
| 2.  | <p>Continue to deliver the 4 Catchments River rehabilitation program to increase environmental resilience of this system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver priority work along the Wakefield River in line with Landscape Board</li> </ul>  | <p>\$360k of funding has been accessed by the NY Landscape Board through the SA Landscape Priority Fund for the <b>Regenerating Catchments in the Mid-North Farmscape project</b>. The project is being delivered with a focus on restoration of priority sections of Wakefield, Light and Gawler River catchments through engaging landholders, fencing, weed control and revegetation. The aim is to create corridors and connectivity between rivers and the scattered areas of remnant native vegetation in support of the declining populations of woodland</p>  |

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|    | <p>priorities and 2020/21 funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding to expand this program through Farm Biodiversity Funds or other external funding stream.</li> </ul>  | <p>birds, improved river health and increased resilience to a changing climate.</p> <p><a href="https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/projects/regenerating-catchments-across-the-mid-north-farmscape">https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/projects/regenerating-catchments-across-the-mid-north-farmscape</a></p>   |
| 3. | <p>Regional Sustainability Hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Concept Plan for a Mid North Sustainability Hub and seek to further develop the recommendations from this concept plan.</li> </ul>   | <p>Concept plan completed and released on Legatus Group website.</p> <p>Lack of interest from current occupants and Legatus Group removing from their business plan.</p> <p>Discussion on virtual hub based around the Trial Compost Site at Peterborough.</p>   |
| 4. | <p>Emergency Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with Councils, the Emergency Services Sector, Zone Emergency Committees, and others, identify plans and preparedness initiatives that will build regional resilience to climate change and natural hazards.</li> </ul> | <p>Landscape Board staff are supporting the state government funded \$9 mill program of work around flood preparedness and infrastructure investment for Gawker River Flood Management. Work completed in 2021/22 includes a program of channel clearance and levy maintenance along the main river channel. Assessment of flood mitigation options and development of a business case for the highest priority work, progressing new drainage network near Virginia and upgrades to flood monitoring and early warning.</p> <p><a href="https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/flood/projects">https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/flood/projects</a></p> <p>RDAYMN has provided a range of data to and scenario analyses to help inform resilience and recovery planning activities within the Yorke &amp; Mid North Zone Emergency Management Committee</p> <p>Legatus Group have commenced the Preparing your community for disasters and emergencies – workshop program and development of a toolkit following funding received via SAFECOM. Due to be completed by November 2023.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Living Flinders Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing control of feral herbivores causing unsustainable grazing pressure impacting on soil stability, native vegetation and farm viability in drying conditions.</li> </ul>   | <p>Project scope renegotiated with federal government and currently being delivered as a drought resilience project. Property planning, land management and business / financial management components are being delivered through a series of workshops. Funding for groundwork related to water infrastructure, stock management and direct seeding revegetation for shelter and erosion management. The current 5-year funding ends on June 30 2023 with negotiations well progressed for an additional 5 year funding agreement.</p>   |
| 6. | <p>Drought-proofing South Australia's Upper North</p>   | <p>Below Goyder's Line project successfully funded for \$600k through the Future Drought Fund. Extension activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>15</b> workshops, <b>7</b> field days and <b>3</b> Agri forums delivered.</li> </ul>  |

- Two project applications for funding under the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund program have been developed and submitted:
  - 1) Below the Goyder Line includes a range of strategies for farmers to plan and improve drought resilience in the transitional zone.
  - 2) Innovative Revegetation in the Southern Flinders seeks to provide demonstration sites that apply innovative direct seeding techniques to establish cross slope strips of perennial vegetation for erosion management and soil health.

- A total of **1182** attendees.
- More than **24** local businesses engaged for catering or room hire purposes.

#### **Soil tests**

- **69** soil samples taken (700 actual holes in the ground!) with sample testing and analysis reports. Soil samples ranging from 0-40cm in depth. Working in collaboration with Brian Hughes from PIRSA.

#### **Containment area grants**

- \$32,000 in grants (32) with an additional \$87,000 leveraged in in-kind contributions from grant recipients.
- Funding was put towards 2 water tanks, 12 troughs, 10 stock feeders, more than 15km's fencing and unknown km's of water pipe laid.
- **58,839** hectares of land now protected during times of drought.

#### **Property Management Plans**

- **15** property management plans developed requiring 150 hours of landholders in-kind time.
- \$157,500 for on-ground funding for the 15 participating landholders with an additional \$150,000 leveraged in in-kind contributions from participating properties.
  - 13.8km fencing, 29 troughs, 13 water tanks, 20km water pipeline, 12 stock feeders, 2 water displacement projects.
- **52** property maps created by NYLB for the property planning process.
- **41,725** hectares are now being managed to best practice standards.

#### **Habitat protected and revegetated**

- **3.5** ha of shelterbelts created – 300+ hours of landholder in-kind.
- **3,200** plants distributed and planted.
- **40** ha remnant vegetation protected.

#### **Delivery Partners**

- **10** community and industry groups collaborated with to deliver project outcomes.
- Provided the platform for the early stages of two new Ag groups
- **1** mixed species pasture trial complete

#### **Communication outcomes**

- **2** [Drought resilience podcasts \(400+ downloads\)](#),
- **8** media articles (8 different avenues),
- **20** Facebook posts
- **4** [Dry times fact sheets](#).

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|     |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">6 re-branded Sustainable Ag themed fact sheets</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">9 re-branded Sustainable Ag themed videos</a></li> <li>- <b>2</b> Sustainable Ag Banners</li> <li>- <b>50</b> new sustainable ag themed images for future media productions</li> </ul>  |
| 8.  | <p>Continue to support the <i>Marna Banggara</i> (Great Southern Ark) rewilding project on the Yorke Peninsula aimed at improving resilience in this farming landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce fox and cat numbers impacting on both farm productivity and native fauna.</li> <li>• Establish 25 km predator exclusion fence across peninsula.</li> <li>• Release nationally endangered Bettongs, which are critical to halting decline in health of native vegetation.</li> </ul> | <p>A 25 Kilometre feral predator (cat and foxes) exclusion fence has been completed. Intensive control program has significantly reduced the numbers of foxes and cats within the fenced area.</p> <p>In 2022 over 120 brush tailed bettongs, sourced from WA and Wedge island, have been translocated and released in the project area. Latest population census indicates good survivorship and reproduction with one trapped bettong identified as being a third generation YP animal.</p> <p>Another release of 80 plus bettongs will occur in mid-June 2023 and again include support from Narungga community</p> <p>Negotiations are underway with the federal government for an additional five years of funding to continue this work.</p> <p>Next stages include expanding the scale of predator control, working more closely with farmers and Narungga communities to increase community involvement, understanding and support for the project</p> |
| 9.  | <p>Continue to identify opportunities to reduce energy and resource consumption for significant operational cost-savings and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light Regional Council Strategic Plan 2016-29</li> <li>• other regional plans.</li> </ul>   | <p>Supporting local businesses to take up energy efficiency audit programs funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments.</p> <p>The Legatus Group have led a collaboration of SA Councils project to assess opportunities available for generation of carbon offsets within South Australia in Council managed assets and to identify potential partnership arrangements amongst the Councils.</p> <p>The project will be delivered in 3 phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1: Eligibility: Are local governments eligible as project proponents to generate Australia Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) on public land, under the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF)?</li> <li>• Phase 2: Feasibility: What opportunities exist for SA local governments to generate ACCUs?</li> <li>• Phase 3: Equity: How can Regional Councils and Metropolitan Councils partner to offset carbon emissions?</li> </ul>                                  |
| 11. | <p>Undertake a coordinated approach to water resources management including linkages to the Water Security Plans, Integrated Water Management</p>   | <p>Development of a Barossa Water Security Strategy was completed in 2022 with a focus now on delivering priority actions. This has stimulated work on “Barossa New Water: project which aims to deliver a considerable volume (over 10 Gl) of additional water to Barossa. The revision of the Barossa</p>  |

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|     | <p>Plans and Water Allocation Plans (WAP) as per Yorke Far North Regional Climate Change Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a coordinated approach to delivering on water resources management priorities outlined in Water Security Plans such as investigating options for alternative / imported water supplies for Clare and Barossa, including access to the Northern Adelaide Irrigation Scheme.</li> <li>• Progress the review of the Clare Valley WAP in line with recommendations from Clare Valley Wine and Grape Association.</li> <li>• Finalise review of the Barossa WAP including community consultation.</li> <li>• Develop the draft Baroota WAP.</li> </ul> | <p>Water Allocation Plan has progressed to finalising principles and producing draft chapters in readiness for stakeholder and community consultation.</p> <p>Draft Baroota WAP has been developed, principles endorsed by the NY Water Planning Committee with plans to undertake community consultation.</p> <p>Review of the Clare Valley WAP is scheduled to commence in the second half of 2023.</p> <p>Investigations into a range of options to access additional “New Water” for Clare have been completed. Supplier demand has been assessed, recommendations made on the most feasible options. The report is awaiting feedback from the state government before progressing to potential to develop a business case.</p> <p>Supporting the development of the Preliminary Business Case for the Clare Valley Water Supply Study.</p>  |
| 12. | <p>Investigate funding opportunities available through the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund for projects aimed at increasing landscape resilience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoring / establishing shelterbelts and areas of native vegetation to reduce soil erosion risk, impacts on stock from increasing winds and temperatures, habitat for native pollinators and beneficial insects and native bird species.</li> <li>• Facilitating development of grower groups</li> </ul>   | <p>A funding bid in 2023 by the landscape board under the Future Drought Fund was unsuccessful. The project concept, an opportunity to build on the work of the previous “Goyder’s Line” project that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with farmers in increasingly marginal country to increase drought resilience through adoption of innovative water retention, revegetation, and grazing strategies.</li> <li>• Was guided by integrated property management plans.</li> <li>• Helped established farmer groups and networks</li> <li>• Developed information sheets and podcasts on priority issues such as containment feed lots</li> </ul> <p>The project concept will be revised and submitted again under future FDF grant opportunities.</p> <p>A federally funded pilot “Carbon plus Biodiversity” project is being delivered by the federal government and ANU through the landscape board.</p> |

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|            | <p>focussing on Regenerative Agriculture and other sustainable farming practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on local climate variability and advice on climate risk applied to specific locations including weather station and soil moisture monitoring networks as decision making tools.</li> <li>• Establish water efficiency demonstration sites using strategies such as contour embankments, sheeted catchment water harvesting, dam construction techniques and rationalisation.</li> </ul>  | <p>Regional SA Urban Sustainability Forum being held 23 June 2023.</p> |
| <p>13.</p> | <p>Develop engagement strategy incorporating the Councils included in the expanded Landscape Board region to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a series of Community Action Planning events to engage local government, community and stakeholders in identifying priorities.</li> <li>• Develop a new 2021-26 Landscape Region Strategic Plan to align Landscape Board annual expenditure with regional priorities.</li> <li>• Provide representation and input into the <i>Town of Gawler Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group</i>.</li> </ul> | <p>Further work required.</p>  |

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| 14. | <p>Continue coordination between the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Primary Industries and Regions SA, the RDA Northern and Yorke and RDA Barossa to ensure the effective delivery of natural resources management projects focussed on drought related biodiversity conservation. This will allow improved community engagement and the ability to work collaboratively with Landcare groups and Friends of Parks groups within the region.</p>                            | <p>With native grassland habitat declining, the NYLB is leading a \$250,000 project to help protect critical pygmy blue-tongue lizard habitat. There are 25 grazing properties around Peterborough area involved to develop and implement property plans to improve native grassland through rotational grazing, to help maintain healthy grasses and inter-tussock spaces for the lizards.</p> <p>Living Flinders Project has worked with PIRSA to deliver extension activities focusing on water storage, watercourse management and water harvesting on properties. The project has also supported 16 landholders (40,000+ha) to recognise and understand landscape processes, capture water within the landscape and understand the ecological and edaphic processes that underpin productivity.</p> <p>NYLB has collaborated with PIRSA to deliver soil extension activities across the region for various Agricultural Bureau of SA branches, as part of NYLB project outcomes.</p> |
| 15. | <p>Investigate funding opportunities for ensuring the water security of the region through the utilisation of recycled water in towns, with a focus on incorporating these concepts in Stormwater Management Plans.</p> <p>Investigate funding opportunities for projects that encourage the uptake of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in regional towns that will increase greenspace and maintain street trees providing community wellbeing and economic returns.</p> | <p>SA Water Smart Irrigation projects with Copper Coast Council and District Council of Orroroo Carrieton commenced and report provided.</p> <p>Stormwater Harvesting project commenced with Space Down Under and Copper Coast Council, Light Regional Council and Adelaide Plains Council and report provided. Now also progressing with Port Pirie and Clare and Gilbert Valleys being investigated.</p>  |
| 16. | <p>Investigate opportunities to deliver regenerative farming demonstration trials that incorporate sustainable agriculture, holistic management, and natural resources management across the management of farms and regions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regenerative farming training</li> </ul>  | <p>The NY Landscape Board has engaged a soils extension officer for two years and part of his role is to deliver soil biology workshops for landholders which includes highlighting the importance of regenerative farming practices</p>  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrated projects that demonstrate better models for land management.</li> </ul> |  |
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## Regional Sector Agreement Actions

### 1. Governance and administration arrangements

The Legatus Group, Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North and RDA Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains have continued to be members of the Regional Alliance Committee (herein referred to as the Committee). The Committee consists of members from the following:

- The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Legatus Group.
- The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of RDA Yorke and Mid North and RDA Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains
- The presiding member and Regional Manager of the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board
- Representatives from the Department of Environment and Water.

The three-year Climate Change Adaptation Plan final signature from all parties occurred on 23 August 2021 and finishes 30 June 2024

### 2. Reporting Requirements

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board currently provides secretarial services for the agreement on behalf of the Alliance this is the second report on the agreement.

### 3. Resourcing Implementation of the Regional Adaptation Plan

The administrative support in 2022-2023 was provided by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board.

### 4. Adaptation Plan implementation

All members continue to support the dissemination of information on climate change from Government to their members. There are some aligned projects that will assist with the plan including:

#### I. Regional Drought Resilience Plan – update

The Alliance members are working in collaboration on a Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program which is one of eight foundation programs under the Commonwealth Government Future Drought Fund. Activities will run under the program until 30 August 2022. The program provides funding for regional agencies to develop regional drought resilience plans. The Northern and Yorke region has been chosen as one of three pilot regions in SA to undertake the program in its foundation year; the local consortium responsible for delivering this pilot in the region comprises:

- Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North (Project Lead)
- Regional Development Australia Barossa, Gawler, Light, and Adelaide Plains
- Regional Development Australia Far North

- Primary Industries South Australia
- Northern and Yorke Landscape Board
- Legatus Group

## 2. Drought Innovation Hub for SA

The members continue to engage with the Drought Innovation Hub for SA and this includes the Legatus Group CEO being a member of both the Roseworthy and Orrorro Node reference groups.

## 5. Information Provision

The Government of South Australia has attended meetings during the reporting period and shared relevant updates.

## 6. External Support

The region has engaged with Andrew Nesbitt Central Coordinator, Regional Climate Partnerships Local Government Association to support information sharing across the region and state.

## 7. Communication and Leadership

The parties to the Regional Sector Agreement have actively shared learnings with other regions across South Australia and participated in state policy activities in the following:

- March 2023 the Northern and Yorke Alliance delivered their annual forum which had a focus on Land Use
- June 2023 the Legatus Group have delivered an Urban Sustainability Forum

The Legatus Group CEO represents the region as a member of the reference group for the EPA as they develop the State of the Environment Report.

The Alliance also supports the Northern and Yorke Landscape Boards Aboriginal Engagement Committee where regular discussions occur with all 5 nations that cover the region.