

**Memorandum of
Administrative Arrangement**

for the provision of

**Community Service Obligations
by ForestrySA**

Annual Report 2011-12

ForestrySA / PIRSA



September 2012

FOREWORD

Despite a challenging operating environment, ForestrySA achieved excellent results in 2011-12 with respect to its community service obligations. It has continued to leverage significant resources through its community engagement program and once again achieved success in securing additional external grants to extend biodiversity programs. ForestrySA also participated in much constructive collaboration with other agencies and land owners to bring an integrated landscape management approach to environmental issues.

Funding of ForestrySA's Community Service Obligations (CSOs) supports native forest management, community use of its forest estate, and programs of industry development and fire protection.

The dedication of ForestrySA staff and their efforts to seek improvements in the operation of the CSO program is especially noteworthy. ForestrySA manages about 25,000 ha of native vegetation across its estate, receives recreational use by over 200,000 visitors, hosts over 300 events each year and contributes over 35,000 volunteer hours through its community engagement program.

Across all its operations, ForestrySA remains committed to achieving the greatest benefit from the management of plantation and native resources for the people of South Australia. This report summarises ForestrySA's CSOs conducted throughout 2011-12.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'IRobertson', written in a cursive style.

Islay Robertson
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
FORESTRYSA**

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1. INTRODUCTION

ForestrySA manages State owned commercial plantations and associated native vegetation for the benefit of the people and the economy of South Australia. ForestrySA operates in two regions; the (Mount Lofty) Ranges including the Mid North, and the Green Triangle.

In addition to its commercial activities, and in accordance with its Charter, ForestrySA undertakes a number of non-commercial activities for which it receives a Community Service Obligation (CSO¹) contribution from the South Australian Government.

CSO funding supports:

- Native forest management
- Community use of forest reserves
- Forestry industry development
- Community protection (including fire) and forest industry support activities.

2. GOVERNANCE

ForestrySA operates in accordance with:

- The **Charter of the South Australian Forestry Corporation** which outlines ForestrySA's strategic commercial direction (commercial operations) and community service obligations to manage native forests, provide for community use of its forests, conduct forest industry development (primarily research) and provide community fire protection.
- The South Australian **Public Corporations Act 1993** which requires that as a public corporation, ForestrySA must perform its commercial operations in accordance with prudent commercial principles and perform its non-commercial operations in an efficient and effective manner consistent with the requirements of its Charter.
- The **South Australian Forestry Corporation Act 2000** which allows ForestrySA to fulfil its statutory functions to be a business enterprise.
- A **Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement (MoAA)** that identifies the services ForestrySA will deliver with the CSO funding it receives and which describes specific reporting requirements. This MoAA is an agreement between ForestrySA and Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA).

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

ForestrySA's activities are undertaken in accordance with its **Policy for Sustainable Forest Management**. ForestrySA is committed to sustainable forest management, a safe environment for employees, and compliance with relevant legislative requirements, standards and codes.

The policy seeks to:

- Provide the framework for Sustainable Forest Management practices, processes, systems and review

¹ Community Service Obligations (CSOs) are non-commercial activities undertaken by government trading enterprises (GTEs) at the direction of government to achieve social policy objectives.

- Optimise environmental, economic, social and cultural values of forests and lands managed by ForestrySA
- Improve organisational performance and forest management outcomes while ensuring the expectations of all customers, stakeholders and the community are considered
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of all persons involved in ForestrySA activities

The full version of the ForestrySA **Policy for Sustainable Forest Management** is available at www.forestry.com.au.

4. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This annual report provides an overview of the CSO funded programs delivered by ForestrySA and a summary of the activities that have been undertaken by ForestrySA during 2011-12, and fulfils one of the reporting requirements under the MoAA.

5. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

5.1 Native forest management

This program supports the management of native vegetation on ForestrySA's Forest Reserves through the development and implementation of landscape scale measures that protect and enhance biodiversity and heritage values. This includes not only the native forests themselves, but more broadly the protection of both indigenous and European heritage sites that provide connections between people, events and our estate.

ForestrySA manages 25,269 ha of native forest and other native vegetation, 15,994 ha of which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserves under the *Forestry Act 1950*. The majority of this native vegetation is surrounded by or adjacent to ForestrySA's commercial softwood plantations.

Native vegetation is managed primarily for the conservation of biodiversity values and contributes significantly to overall biodiversity conservation in South Australia. A diverse range of plants and animals are found, including a number of rare and threatened species. ForestrySA continues to undertake flora and fauna surveys, and maintains species lists for each Native Forest Reserve.

Activities delivered under this program include:

- Native forest management
- Assessment of biodiversity values
- Pest plant and animal control
- Provision of natural history information to the public
- Collaboration for landscape scale outcomes
- Prescribed burning for ecological purposes

Forest Management Plans have been prepared for the Northern Forests (2008), Mount Burr (2010), Mount Gambier (2011) and Penola (2011) Forest Reserves. A plan for the Mount Lofty Ranges is being prepared and will be released for public comment during 2012-13. Forest Management Plans describe the resources and values of each forest reserve and identify appropriate management actions.

5.2 Community use of forest reserves

Forest Reserves provide the setting for a wide range of recreation activities including: walking, nature study, picnicking, camping, cycling, cave diving, horse riding and motor sport events. The community use program enhances the visitor experience by providing and maintaining a range of visitor facilities, and by providing educational and information materials and opportunities.

Visitor facilities include camping and picnic areas, tracks and trails, forest information centres and roadside stops, as well as purpose built facilities such as the Cudlee Creek mountain bike trails. Forest recreation information and educational materials are provided to the community via forest signs, brochures, maps and the ForestrySA website, www.forestrysa.com.au/Recreation.aspx.

A number of high profile events take place on Forest Reserves including the Bundaleer Festival at Bundaleer, and the Pines Enduro at Mount Burr, as well as local club car rallies and horse endurance rides.

Services delivered under this program include:

- Development and maintenance of appropriate visitor facilities
- Provision of forest information
- Management and permitting of forest events
- Employment of Rangers for compliance and education activities
- Visitor management

ForestrySA's community use program provides school groups and other organisations with opportunities to assist in the management of native vegetation in a voluntary capacity and to learn more about the values contained within these important native forest remnants.

Recreational activities are managed to avoid commercial forestry operations and to ensure the protection of environmental values.

5.3 Forest industry development

ForestrySA continues to be nationally recognised by the forest industry for developing and maintaining a forest research capability of a higher standard and breadth than it would otherwise undertake as a purely commercial business. CSO funded research constitutes about 40% of ForestrySA's total forest research budget.

Research and the dissemination of information for the benefit of the State and forestry industry, including forestry demonstration and gene conservation plantings are at the core of the program:

- Projects to improve forest productivity and sustainable forest management sourced from defined areas of interest
- Provision of information and communication services (fact sheets, articles, field days)
- Management of forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas in accordance with management plans developed by PIRSA

The forest industry development program undertakes research projects in research priority areas identified in a number of published research strategies and as agreed with PIRSA.

Research priority areas have been identified by organisations such as:

- The Research Priorities and Coordination Committee, a sub-committee of the Forest and Forest Products Committee
- Forest and Wood Products Australia

Areas of research conducted under the MoAA include:

- Environmental impact
- Tree improvement and genetics
- Product improvement and innovation
- Climate change
- Bio-energy

5.4 Community fire protection

ForestrySA provides a level of fire protection to the community greater than required for the protection of its own commercial assets and greater than provided by equivalent private sector forestry companies.

ForestrySA maintains and operates seven fire spotting towers in the Green Triangle, which provide early detection of fires occurring on both ForestrySA land, and on other plantation growers' land and farmland. ForestrySA fire crews respond to fires occurring on ForestrySA land, other forest owners' land and on other nearby land. ForestrySA also provides trained incident management personnel to assist with the management of fires on other land tenures.

Fire protection of the community is also enhanced through the annual programs of fire break maintenance and protection work which are carried out on main roads, council roads, power line easements, and other public land. This on-the-ground work variously comprises slashing, grading, herbicide application and ploughing to reduce potentially dangerous fuel loads.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2011-12

The following is a brief overview of CSO activities delivered during 2011-12.

6.1. Native forest management

Pasture Strip

In 2011-12 ForestrySA implemented the first stage of a five year project to re-plant an area of former grazing land in the Green Triangle near Glencoe, known locally as the Pasture Strip. When restored, this 160 ha parcel of land will link the Wandilo and Hackett Hill Native Forest Reserves.

Parts of the Pasture Strip will be replanted with native plants and other areas of degraded wetland will be rehabilitated. Already a pair of brolgas have already nested on one of the wetlands and raised their chicks since the removal of sheep and cattle grazing from the area in 2008.

Over 10,000 native seedlings have been raised by local school nurseries for the project. All of the seedlings were grown from seed collected from nearby Native Forest Reserves and local roadsides.

The Pasture Strip project compliments ForestrySA's ongoing wildlife corridor project.

Wildlife corridor project

ForestrySA has already established over 9 km of corridors covering an area of 70 ha. Eight hectares of additional corridor were established in 2011-12. The objective is to establish over 20 km of corridors by the time the project is completed.

Wildlife monitoring to measure the value of the corridors began in 2006. Bird populations are being used as an indicator of the corridors' effectiveness. More than 52 bird species have been observed utilising the corridors, including Eastern Yellow Robins, White Throated Tree Creepers and Bassian Thrush. A bird-banding project began in 2011-12 which will help to provide further information of bird activity within the corridors and adjacent native forest reserves.

A successful bid by ForestrySA for a Native Vegetation Council "Significant Environmental Benefit Grant" has resulted in additional funding of \$330,000 over the next five years to continue this project.

Valley Lake Wildlife Park

Following ForestrySA's completion of a detailed rehabilitation and development plan for Mount Gambier's iconic Valley Lake Wildlife Park in 2010-11, the Mount Gambier City Council was able to secure funding of \$10,000 over two years from the Queen Elizabeth Park Trust Inc. This funding was used for the purchase of planting stock.

Significant site works were completed, including mass plantings to celebrate National Tree Day in July 2011. The day attracted over 200 participants from the local community including several service groups.

The development plan is broken down into a number of components which provides the Council with a range of projects which can be timed and executed according to resources. In their entirety, the components combine to provide a comprehensive long term approach to the rehabilitation of the area.

Interpretive signage will be erected at the various demonstration sites within the park and at the main entrance. The signage at the entrance will also provide visitors with information on the network of ForestrySA Native Forest Reserves and wildlife corridors in the Green Triangle.

Orchid conservation

ForestrySA has partnered with the University of Adelaide, South Australian Museum, the Australian Orchid Foundation, Nature Foundation SA, SA Water and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to support an Australian Research Council Industry Linkage Grant Proposal.

The project involves investigating the impacts of fire on plant communities, with a focus on terrestrial orchid species. As a contributing partner ForestrySA will provide \$5000 per annum for three years for the term of the study. The findings from this study will be used to inform ecological burning regimes and native forest management in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia (NOSSA) in collaboration with the Threatened Plant Action Group (TPAG) completed orchid surveys in selected native forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle Regions.

These volunteers provide ForestrySA with access to expert advice and assist in the production of highly detailed maps, which are then recorded on ForestrySA's GIS layer to ensure the range and distribution of species is accurately recorded so that identified sites can be adequately protected.

Each year surveys have led to new species and previously unknown distributions being identified. In the Ranges, two new populations of the Nationally Endangered orchids, *Caladenia behrii* and *Caladenia rigida* were discovered in the Mount Crawford and Kuitpo Forest Reserves respectively.

Rehabilitation of Leg of Mutton Gully

Grant funding of \$30,000 was fully acquitted in the Mount Lofty Ranges following rehabilitation works in Leg of Mutton Gully in Old Kersbrook Forest.

Brolgas return

A pair of brolgas nested for the first time on a restored wetland within a ForestrySA plantation east of Mount Burr at Brooksby Lane.

ForestrySA employees constructed a weir using sandbags to partially block a drain which had been constructed in the 1930s. With the water level in the wetland raised by about 20 centimetres the conditions were made suitable for the Brolgas to nest and raise a chick. Brolgas are member of the crane family and are listed with a conservation status of "vulnerable" in South Australia. With the weir now established it is hoped that Brolgas will continue to regularly nest at the site.

Weed and pest animal control

Throughout the year, ForestrySA employees and contractors have continued to undertake control works to remove pest plants and animals from priority sites within the approximately 25,000 ha of native vegetation managed by ForestrySA.

Integration of weed control activities within Conservation and General Forestry zones in the Mount Lofty Ranges continues to provide benefits. A recent survey for the highly invasive weed, Topped Lavender, at Rocky Creek Kuitpo, revealed only small areas of the weed persisting following five years of intensive control efforts in both softwood and hardwood plantations and in the adjacent conservation zone.

Release of biological control agents for woody weeds continues in the Ranges. The English Broom Gall Mite was released in Echung Creek, Kuitpo and Cudlee Creek, Mount Crawford. A new strain of blackberry rust was also introduced at Cudlee Creek following the successful results from a release in 2007 which resulted in the death of a large amount of blackberry.

Landscape scale conservation planning

ForestrySA has collaborated with a number of groups contributing to landscape scale conservation planning in South Australia. These have included the Southern Flinders Conservation Action Planning project “Living Flinders” which has improved integrated management of weeds and feral animals in the Northern Forests; and the Mount Compass Swamp Gum and Southern Emu Wren recovery teams in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

South Para River corridor

ForestrySA continues to work with SA Water and DEWNR to undertake integrated weed control along the South Para River corridor. The river flows across land managed by all three agencies in the area upstream of the South Para Reservoir. Many years of investment in weed control has made a significant improvement to this once degraded reach of the river.

6.2 Community use of forest reserves

Forest Reserves continue to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for local communities. Camping, horse riding, walking and mountain biking are popular activities undertaken in either native forest or plantation areas. Permits are issued for camping, horse riding, cave diving and firewood collection.

Pines Enduro

The Pines Enduro, a round of the Australian Off-Road Championship for off road buggies, was held in the Mount Burr forest during September. The 400 km long race comprised six laps of a 66 km course. More than three quarters of the length of the course ran through ForestrySA land, with the start / finish line and main spectator areas located on adjacent private land. The event attracted competitors and spectators from across Australia.

Local car rally clubs also staged a number of events on ForestrySA land during the year. Events are conducted in accordance with conditions that ensure that environmental damage is minimised and events do not disrupt forest operations. Local events usually attract up to 20 competitors.

Cave diving

The South East of South Australia contains some of the best cave diving sites in Australia, a number of which are located on ForestrySA land. ForestrySA regulates access to caves on its land through the *Forestry Regulations (2005)* and a licencing agreement with the Cave Diving Association of Australia (CDAA).

ForestrySA, together with other agencies (SAPOL, DEWNR and local councils), participates in the CDAA Land Owners’ Forum to ensure a consistent approach to the regulation of cave diving across the region. Two fatalities in the past few years have highlighted the need to ensure that controls adequately minimise the risks to both participants and land owners who choose to grant access to water-filled caves.

Hell’s Hole

Hell’s Hole is a sinkhole 20 km south east of Mount Gambier which is popular with sightseers and cave divers. Significant redevelopment of public access to Hell’s Hole has

resulted in a dramatic reduction in the incidence of acts of vandalism and rubbish dumping at the site.

The work was largely carried out by community members under the supervision of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). ForestrySA provides work opportunities to DCS as a part of its community engagement program. The works undertaken at Hell's Hole attracted media coverage.

Upgraded website and signage

A new-look ForestrySA website was launched during December 2011, providing members of the public with easier access to recreation, conservation and plantation forestry information.

New highway signs identifying ForestrySA pine plantations in the Green Triangle were installed in December 2011. The new signs identify the forest reserve and contain interchangeable messages on the theme of sustainability.

International Year of Forests 2011

In August 2011, ForestrySA in conjunction with PIRSA, hosted a trio of field trips for teachers in different locations across the state - Jamestown, Mount Barker and Mount Gambier. Coinciding with the International Year of Forests which aimed to raise awareness of the need for sustainable management of forests around the world, participating teachers were introduced to "Forestry Matters", PIRSA's forest education resource, and the new online educational resources located at www.forestlearning.edu.au.

Also celebrating the International Year of Forests, schools from around the South East of South Australia were invited to participate in the ForestrySA School Photography Competition. Prize winners were announced at a small function at the ForestrySA Head Office in November. People's Choice Award winners were decided by public ballot during an exhibition at the Riddoch Art Gallery, coinciding with AUSTimber 2012.

Another International Year of Forests initiative was the Artists in Residence Program. In November 2011, six artists from both the South East and Adelaide area took up residence in the Thomas Hill Study Centre in the Mount Crawford Forest. The program was documented by an Adelaide firm Environmental and Science Media, and posted on the ForestrySA and PIRSA web pages. The resulting exhibition was opened on the June 22, and was also captured on film.

Scientists in Schools program

For the second year in a row, ForestrySA has participated in the CSIRO initiative *Scientists in Schools* program, conducted in conjunction with Mount Gambier High School. The program involved nine ForestrySA scientific staff and over 300 students and teachers. ForestrySA presented science education activities and lessons covering entomology, soils, native forest management, pygmy perch water quality monitoring, GPS operation and Fireking fire truck design. Once again the overwhelming response from both students and teachers was that this program made "science real" and raised awareness of the many facets of science that underpin the forest industry.

Partnership with Urrbrae TAFE

Another successful year of partnership with Urrbrae TAFE staff and students resulted in:

- Protection of threatened flora species through Bushcare weed control in Jupiter Creek and at Kuitpo work depot
- Tube stock planting of indigenous species at Cudlee Creek
- Removal of wild pine from approximately 20 ha of conservation zone at Mount Crawford.
- Production of a rehabilitation plan for Scotts Forest Reserve, Mount Crawford
- Biological survey over one week at Christmas Hill Native Forest Reserve, Kuitpo

Value of forest reserves

A new study, *Quantifying non-timber values of South Australia's Mount Lofty Ranges and Northern Forest Reserves*, initiated by PIRSA and carried out in conjunction with ForestrySA, assigns economic indicators to the intrinsic value of ForestrySA forest estate. The information contained within the report will be used to inform decisions on providing resources for the management of these areas.

The report supports the findings of similar studies and concludes that the range of opportunities afforded by these forests play a significant role in contributing to social capital, especially for the people of Adelaide.

Visitor surveys

Three new traffic and four new pedestrian counters have been acquired for installation in the Mount Lofty Ranges. The counters, in conjunction with a visitor / consumer research survey are being used to record visitor usage and expectations leading to a more strategic approach by ForestrySA for planning for public use.

Catching unwanted visitors

Surveillance cameras which were first introduced in 2011 to help address unwanted behaviour within the Green Triangle forest estate continue to play an important role in compliance and monitoring of key visitor installations such as Hell's Hole and have already lead to a decline in the illegal removal of fire wood from native forests.

6.3 Forest Industry Development (Research)

Release of CSIRO South Australian climate change forestry impacts and adaption

Climate variability is one of the most significant risks facing the plantation forest industry in Australia. Modelling of potential climatic variability, especially extremes in in temperature and rainfall patterns based upon the best available science is required to provide a level of certainty in planning for the future of the plantation industry in South Australia.

A CSO funded report, *Predicted impacts of potential climate change on the plantation forest industry in South Australia* (CSIRO), was completed in July 2011. The report provides a management tool to assist in sustaining or improving the provision of future wood supplies to the timber industry and information to facilitate the application of sustainable land management practices under changing climatic conditions. Copies of the report are available at www.pir.sa.gov.au/forestry.

Australian Plantation Industry Herbicide Research Consortium

In 1999, ForestrySA with a number of interstate industry partners, funded a series of residual herbicide screening trials for pre and post planting use in Radiata pine and Tasmanian blue gums in conjunction with Dr Barry Tomkins. Since this time the industry herbicide cooperative has increased to include 20 forest industry partners with trials being established across southern Australia.

In December 2009, funding from Forest Wood Products Australia was secured to continue and expand the work started by Dr Tomkins under the banner of the Australian Plantation Industry Herbicide Research Consortium (APIHRC). CSO funding contributes to this Consortium with three trial sites established in 2011 as part of this cooperative herbicide screening research program.

Forestry Herbicide Field Days

ForestrySA held field days showcasing forestry herbicide research in Mount Gambier on 25 and 26 October 2011. The field days were held in conjunction with the Australian Plantation Industry Herbicide Research Consortium (APIHRC), Forest Wood Products Australia (FWPA), the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) and PIRSA (Agriculture, Food, Wine and Forestry).

On the first day, the FWPA presented a technical briefing on the latest research findings from FWPA funded projects and ForestrySA CSO funded projects were presented:

- Results from three operational field trials of coppice control using chemical application at time of harvesting
- *Radiata Pine Young Age Fertiliser Response Prediction Tool for the Green Triangle Region*
- Use of Lidar for forest measurement
- CSIRO *Climate Change and Adaption Report for the Plantation Industry in South Australia*

On the second day, ForestrySA held a site visit field day for APIHRC consortium members. Seven field trials were visited, focussing on 2010-11 herbicide screening and operational trials. A total of 57 people participated in the field days from across the Green Triangle, the rest of Australia and New Zealand.

First / second rotation *Eucalyptus globulus* productivity project

ForestrySA received funding in 1999 for a *Eucalyptus globulus* nutrient monitoring program which saw the establishment of growth and nutrient monitoring plots in private and publically owned Tasmanian blue gum plantations across the Green Triangle Region. The plots were measured during the first rotation of these plantations and the data made available to the plantation owners and the public. PIRSA Forestry had also established a series of growth monitoring plots across a range of sites to compare of first and second rotation productivity on a wide range of sites.

Tasmanian blue gum readily coppices, and many growers are establishing the second rotation tree crop using coppice regrowth. Early trials indicated that coppice management is not simple or reliable. So during 2011, the **First / second rotation *Eucalyptus globulus* productivity project** was established across second rotation trial sites from the previous ForestrySA and PIRSA Forestry growth monitoring plots. The plots have been coppiced or replanted with seedlings to compare: *Eucalyptus globulus* first rotation (1R)

and second rotation (2R, coppice) growth rates; and *Eucalyptus globulus* second rotation (2R, coppice) and seedling growth rates.

Results from the project will be used to provide guidelines for second and subsequent rotation Tasmanian blue gum plantation management via a decision making tool based on first rotation productivity, stocking rates at harvesting and productivity potential of the plantation site.

***Eucalyptus leucoxylon* seed orchards established on ForestrySA land**

This project aims to test and compare the form and growth of *E. leucoxylon* seed sourced from natural stands in South Australia. Seed was collected from 80 *E. leucoxylon* trees in South Australia. Seed collection records have been coded and categorised into regions for seed collected from: Kangaroo Island; Fleurieu Peninsula; Mid North; and South East.

During 2011, trials have been planted at four sites; one in the Green Triangle (Willunga Downs) and three in the Mount Lofty Ranges (Scrimshaws, Bundaleer and Gumeracha).

South Australian Farm Tree Improvement

The Farm Tree Improvement Project was established to assess the suitability of different seed sources for a number of species and site types. Species were selected for characteristics such as fast growth rate, tolerance of extreme conditions and for value as a plant product. Trials were established across the state in the Murray Mallee, the Mid North, the South East and the Mount Lofty Ranges on a series of site types.

As part of this project, seed production areas were established to supply genetically improved seed from species of *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* (Sugar Gum), *Eucalyptus occidentalis* (Flat-topped Yate) and *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo Pine). The most desirable characteristics are: high planting stock survival, drought, disease resistance, rapid growth and good form e.g. straight trunks for timber or numerous straight stems for Broombush.

During 2011, ForestrySA checked the entire base data of trial information that had previously been used to base reports on and as result reworked Species Performance Assessments including recalculated volume production.

6.4 Community Fire Protection

Fuel reduction burning

A fuel reduction burn plan identifying all of the areas of native forest that ForestrySA aims to treat in the Green Triangle over a six year period has been completed. The burn plan identifies about 600 ha to be burnt each year for ecological and fire protection objectives, mostly in Native Forest Reserves.

Eight burns were completed in the Green Triangle in 2011/12, with four being undertaken in spring and the other four in autumn. The total area treated was just over 360 ha.

In the Mount Lofty Ranges, three burns were completed by the Mount Lofty Ranges Fire Cooperative at Mount Gawler Native Forest Reserve in spring, treating 140 ha. This Fire Cooperative is made up of ForestrySA, Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR), SA Water and the CFS. The cooperative members work together to develop a prioritised prescribed burning program and share resources for prescribed burning operations. The Cooperative also developed a draft South Para Fire Management

Plan. The plan covers over 20,000 ha of public land managed by DEWNR, ForestrySA and SA Water in the South Para area of the Mount Lofty Ranges. The draft plan will be released for public comment and finalised during 2012-13.

In the Mid North, only one prescribed burn was undertaken by the Southern Flinders Fire Cooperative, also comprising ForestrySA, DEWNR, SA Water and the CFS. Unfortunately this 35 ha burn escaped control lines and developed into a wildfire that burnt over 700 ha including ForestrySA native forest and pine plantation, and some private land.

All recent ForestrySA prescribed burns and significant wildfire events have been digitised and are now available online as part of the DEWNR NatureMaps website.

ForestrySA continues to be involved in the South East, Mount Lofty Ranges and Southern Flinders Fire Cooperatives, the Heads of Agencies for Public Land Fire Management Committee and the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee.

Fire season

The 2011-12 fire season was a return to more average conditions following the mild season experienced during the previous year. The ForestrySA fire season commenced on 15 December 2011 in the Ranges Region and on 29 December in the Green Triangle Region.

Severe fire weather conditions were only experienced on five days. The worst fire weather for the season occurred on 2 January 2012. At just after 2.00 pm, a fire started on private land approximately one kilometre north of ForestrySA plantation at Glencoe. ForestrySA crews arrived within 10 minutes and were able to assist CFS crews to control the fire before it could spread to ForestrySA land. Had this fire not been contained quickly, it had the potential to cause significant damage to ForestrySA assets.

ForestrySA attended 38 fires for the season, 16 on its own land and 22 on Crown land, other plantation growers land or private property. The largest fire on ForestrySA land occurred on 7 May 2012 in the Wirrabara Forest and was caused by an escape from a prescribed burn. The fire burnt 579 ha of native forest, 53 ha of private land and 115 ha of ForestrySA pine plantation.

Mount Benson Fire Tower upgrade

ForestrySA operates a network of seven fire towers in the Green Triangle. The towers locate fire ignitions as quickly as possible after they start. In addition to spotting fires within ForestrySA plantation and native forest areas, fires are also detected on the land of other plantation owners and on surrounding farm land.

A major refurbishment of the Mount Benson Fire Tower was completed prior to the start of the 2011-12 fire season. As part of the upgrade process, the cabin was lifted off the top of the tower and taken back to the ForestrySA depot in Mount Gambier where all of the timber construction was rebuilt and all of the steel corrosion repaired. The refurbished cabin was then transported back to Mount Benson and re-installed.

The Mount Benson tower is located near Cape Jaffa, with the other ForestrySA towers located at Penola, Comaum, Mount Edward, Mount Burr, The Bluff and Furner. The fire towers are operated on days of high fire danger. The towers were operated for 124 days during the 2011-12 fire season, with fire lookout observers on duty for a total of 2,587 hours.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

Operating statement for the financial year ended 30 June 2012

	COMMUNITY FORESTRY ²	FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION	2011-12	2010-11
INCOME					
CSO funds	2 137 000	451 000	416 000	3 004 000	2 941 000
EXPENSES					
Salary & wages	1,133,696	236,231		1,369,927	1 335 109
Plant & equipment	18,936	37		18,973	37 098
Materials	63,941	7,189		71,130	62 018
Contracts & services	622,751	30,218		652,969	588 512
Vehicles	233,044	24,650		257,694	206 442
Staff related expenses	27,403	4,315		31,718	48 572
Information technology	19,110	2,548		21,658	14 197
Building & property	55,595			55,595	385 871
Administration & finance	51,199	6,685		57,884	69 208
Fire Protection (total)			1,290,315	1,290,315	931 313
TOTAL	2,225,675	311,873	1,290,315	3,827,863	3 678 340

² Native forest management & community use of forest reserves combined.

8. KEY STATISTICS

Native Forest Management Program

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Native forest conservation	Total area of Gazetted Native Forest Reserve	Maintained or increased target	15,994 hectares
Assess and extend biodiversity and heritage values	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works plan achieved and reviewed	Yes
Pest plant and animal control	Relevant actions completed from Forest management Plans	>75% of scheduled actions complete	Yes
	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works reviewed	Yes
Provision of natural history information to the public	Public Events	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided Forest Walk - Wandilo Pasture Strip 2. National Tree Day – Valley Lake
	Native Forest Reserve resource documents available online	All completed documents available	Yes
Collaboration for landscape scale outcomes	Representation on peak groups	10 Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Recovery Team 2. Threatened Plant Recovery Team 3. Green Triangle Regional Plantations Committee - Natural Resources Management Sub-committee 4. Living Flinders Planning Committee 5. Mount Lofty Ranges Fire Cooperative 6. Mount Lofty Ranges Fleurieu Swamps and Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren Recovery Program 7. Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery

			Program 8. South Lofty Block Threatened Orchid Recovery Program 9. South Para Natural Resources Management Committee 10. Mount Bold / Scott Creek Biodiversity Hotspots Group 11. Sixth Creek Catchment Group 12. Mount Compass Oak-bush and Marsh Gum Recovery Team
Prescribed burning for ecological purposes	Areas planned, scheduled and burnt	>75% burns achieved (within prescription) over 3 years	No ecological burning was planned or completed

Community Use of Forest Reserves Program

Provision of a range of permitted non-commercial activities	Number of permits by category Website shows activities available	No specific target set for this period Website up to date	Camping nights – 2856 Horse riding – 193 people Cave diving – 808 user days Firewood – 223 loads Events – 9843 user days Yes
Public usage	Visitor numbers recorded	>200 000	163,734
Opportunities for community engagement	Stakeholder consultation for CSO related activities	Stakeholder feedback received	Yes
Diversity of community groups involved	Number of different community groups engaged	>25	31
Rangers available for compliance, facilitation, education, support	Rangers employed Ranger contacts	7 FTE >previous year	7 FTE Yes – 15,980
A system of monitoring use in compliance with forestry regulations	Number of compliance incidents	No specific target set for this period	114
Volunteer hours attributed to Community Engagement Program	Hours	>20 000	35,000
Comments from the community with regard to community use	Media coverage	No specific target set for this period	Media coverage of many events held on ForestrySA land throughout the year.
Projects to address visitor management	Works Plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works Plan achieved and reviewed	Yes

Forest Industry Development

Projects to improve forest productivity and sustainable forest management sourced from defined Areas of Interest	Project proposal justification points directly to area of Interest	100% new projects	Yes
Agreed information and communication services provided (factsheets, articles, field days)	Project communications	100% of proposed factsheets etc. and 2 field days per year	Trial Reports - 11 Field Days - 2
Forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas are managed consistent with management plans developed by PIRSA	Agreed annual works programs (Gumeracha, Wandilo, Bundaleer)	90% target dates met	Yes

Community Fire Protection Program

Contribution to state wide or landscape scale fire protection initiatives	Attendance at State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) and Bushfire Management Committee (BMC) meetings	80% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBCC 60% • Limestone Coast BMC 100% • Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges BMC 75%
Contribution to regional fire suppression	Fires attended by ForestrySA on lands other than Forest Reserves	Number of fires	22
Prescribed burning undertaken for fuel reduction	Areas planned scheduled and burnt	>75% of scheduled burns achieved as a three year average	Green Triangle -360/600ha = 60% Ranges - 176/309ha = 57%
Comments from the community with regard to fire management (whether positive, negative or neutral)	Media coverage	No specific target set for this period	Both positive and negative comments were included in media coverage of bushfire response and prescribed burning