

COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



FOREWORD



The Charter of the South Australian Forestry Corporation outlines the primary commercial operations of the organisation. It also stipulates a number of specific, non-commercial activities to be carried out by ForestrySA. These are agreed to be non-commercial by both the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Treasurer.

This report summarises these activities during the 2018-19 period, funded via ForestrySA's purchasing arrangement with the Minister and the Treasurer, known as Community Service Obligations (CSO).

Funding for ForestrySA's CSO program supports native forest management, community fire protection, community use of its forest estate and programs for industry development. CSO activities and reporting requirements are determined and monitored under a Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement between ForestrySA and Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

ForestrySA remains a committed leader in public land management having undertaken conservation works across 4,385ha (27%) of gazetted native forest reserve area.

Visitors remained active in the forest estate with another successful year of popular events. Ghost Mushroom Lane in the Green Triangle region and the Nature Play SA Forest Festival in the Mount Lofty Ranges both attracted thousands of visitors.

A range of other recreational events attracted more than 250,000 visitors to the forests in both regions.

The constant threat of bushfires over the fire danger season has again been monitored and closely managed by ForestrySA fire crews. Crews attended 43 fires both on and off ForestrySA land. ForestrySA continued these fire management and risk mitigation activities in partnership with other agencies, including the Country Fire Service.

ForestrySA has again successfully undertaken a range of community services to deliver better visitation experiences to the public. An increasing range of recreational experiences is now on offer, delivering a unique combination of access to plantation and native forest reserves in close proximity to much of the state's population.

With increasing public interest in connecting people with their natural surroundings, we look forward to leveraging strong relationships with other public agencies in the continued delivery of ForestrySA's Community Service Obligations.

Julian Speed - Chief Executive

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. GOVERNANCE	1
3. POLICY FRAMEWORK	1
4. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT	1
5. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS	2
5.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT	2
5.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES	2
5.3 FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	3
5.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION	3
6. ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2018-19	4
6.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT	4
6.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FORESTS	8
6.3 FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	12
6.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION	13
6.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS	15
7. KEY STATISTICS	16
7.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT	16
7.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES	17
7.3 FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	20
7.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION	21
7.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS	22

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1. INTRODUCTION

ForestrySA manages:

- the state-owned commercial plantations in the Mount Lofty Ranges
- Native forest reserves and recreational access to OneFortyOne Plantations forest in the Green Triangle
- areas of native vegetation (most of which is gazetted as native forest reserve) within the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle

In addition to its commercial activities, and in accordance with its charter, ForestrySA undertakes a number of non-commercial activities as a Community Service Obligation (CSO) for which it receives funding 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
- Management of the Mid North forests

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 CSOs to manage native forests, provide community fire protection, provide for community use of its forests and conduct forest industry development (primarily research).
- 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 as a public corporation.
- A Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement (MoAA) that identifies the services ForestrySA will deliver with the Community Service Obligation (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 Sustainable Forest Management Policy.

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
- 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

The full version of ForestrySA's Sustainable Forest Management Policy is available at www.forestrysa.com.au.

4. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides an overview of the CSO-funded programs delivered by ForestrySA and a summary of the activities that have been undertaken by ForestrySA during 2018-19. It also 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-managed land through the development and implementation of landscape-scale measures that protect and enhance biodiversity and heritage values. This includes native forests, but more broadly the protection of both Indigenous and European heritage sites that provide connections between people, events and our estate.

ForestrySA manages approximately 25,000ha of native forest and other areas of natural features, 16,059ha of which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserve under the *Forestry Act 1950*. Most of this native vegetation is surrounded by or adjacent to commercial softwood plantation, with more than 12,000ha located in the Green Triangle

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

5.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

ForestrySA-managed land provides the setting for a wide range of recreational activities including walking, nature studies, picnicking, camping, cycling, cave diving, fossicking, horse riding and motor sport events. ForestrySA is committed to and has built its recreational brand on passive recreational activities which reduce impacts on the environment and to visitors of forest reserves. The community use program enhances the visitor experience by providing and maintaining a range of visitor facilities, and educational and information materials and opportunities.

Visitor facilities include camping and picnic areas, tracks and trails, forest information centres and roadside stops. ForestrySA also provides purpose-built facilities including the Cudlee Creek mountain bike trail network, which is receiving additional attention following the State Government's commitment to establishing the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges as an internationally recognised mountain bike destination.

ForestrySA is committed to the ongoing improvement of general facilities, including the recent upgrade of ablution facilities at designated campgrounds within the Kuitpo and Mount Crawford Forest Reserves.

Forest recreation information and educational materials are provided to the community via forest signs, brochures, maps and the ForestrySA website, www.forestrysa.com.au.

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

Research and the dissemination of information for the benefit of the state and the forestry industry, including forestry demonstration and gene conservation plantings, are at the core of ForestrySA's industry development program:

- Projects to improve forest productivity and sustainable forest management
- Provision of information and communication services (fact sheets, articles, field days)
- Management of forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas
- Forest Research Mount Gambier is a partnership between the University of South Australia, the forest industry, the Federal Government and the Government of South Australia, facilitated by ForestrySA. It will assist in delivering the regional priorities of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI). Located at UniSA's Mount Gambier Campus, Forest Research Mount Gambier will support South Australia's \$1.2b forest industry. This partnership will create a strategic alliance to leverage outcomes and provide highly skilled research resources to address forest industry needs. Forest Research Mount Gambier will play a vital role in fostering collaboration, supporting research, boosting innovation and maintaining jobs while making Mount Gambier one of the major centres for forest industry research in the country.

The forest industry development program undertakes research projects in defined areas of interest with priority areas identified from a number of published research strategies. Priority areas for research have been identified using information published by organisations such as Forest and Wood Products Australia and through consultation with industry.

Areas of research conducted under the MoAA include:

- Environmental impacts
- Tree improvement and genetics
- Product improvement and innovation
- Climate change and bioenergy

5.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

ForestrySA's integrated fire activities include protection of commercial plantation, native forest and a commitment to fire protection activities to support local communities.

This CSO program supports activities beyond the protection of ForestrySA's commercial assets.

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.

A fire tower at Mount Crawford is activated on days of high fire danger. ForestrySA fire crews respond to fires occurring on ForestrySA-managed land, other forest owners' land and on neighbouring properties within defined response zones.

ForestrySA may provide trained incident management personnel to assist with the management of fires at the request of the Country Fire Service.

Community fire protection is enhanced through annual fire break and track maintenance programs, prescribed burning and protection work which is carried out across ForestrySA-managed land.

This on-ground work covers over 1,000ha each year and involves slashing, grading, herbicide application and ploughing to reduce contiguous fuel levels and potentially dangerous fuel loads.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2018-19

6.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Mount Lofty Ranges Conservation Management Plans

A draft conservation management plan for Kuitpo Forest Reserve is complete and awaiting internal review. This plan aims to capture all significant biodiversity information across all forest localities and land uses within the reserve.

It complements information contained in Native Forest Reserve Management Plans documents, which covers only information for gazetted native forest areas. Over the coming years, ForestrySA intends to complete similar plans for the Mount Crawford and Second Valley Forest Reserves.

Green Triangle Forest Management Plan

The current Green Triangle Forest Management Plan covers the framework for sustainable forest management. The objective focuses on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the areas of 53 native forest reserves.

Achievements include preparation of the Green Triangle resources document. The overall draft is produced and includes material collected and collated on south east vegetation, soils, geology and landforms. Field work has concentrated on vegetation classification descriptions and example photographs throughout the area.

Work has focused on the collation of field work results into the many ecological communities that will form the basis of the book. This resource complements the Green Triangle management objectives and will be a valuable addition to the industry.

Biological surveys

In the Mount Lofty Ranges, flora surveys are undertaken prior to prescribed burning and as part of general threatened species monitoring. In the Mount Gawler Native Forest Reserve, a new population of the state rare plant *Phyllanthus striaticaulis* was located. This is the only known location of these plants in this part of the Mount Lofty Ranges, with the next nearest known population located in the Fleurieu Peninsula.

The plant was affected by the Sampson Flat bushfire in 2015 and could not be located after the fire. The new populations were likely stimulated to reproduce from seed, following the fire.

Another exciting discovery was made at Second Valley Forest Reserve location known as Martin's. The nationally endangered orchid *Prasophyllum murfettii* was found on the edge of a section of Fleurieu Peninsula swamp. The species had not been recorded there for more than 15 years. An ecological prescribed burn is planned for the site in autumn 2020 to further stimulate regeneration of the orchid.

The only known population of the nationally endangered orchid, *Thelymitra cyanapicata*, present in Kuitpo Forest's Knott Hill locality, will be given a boost following the successful propagation of the species from seed by the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

This project was jointly funded by ForestrySA and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). About 100 seedlings will be planted in a new location of similar habitat at Kuitpo during winter 2019, to extend the range of the orchid and increase numbers.

6.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT continued



Above: DEW Threatened Flora Ecologist and members of the Native Orchid Society of SA investigate suitable habitat areas to plant the *Thelymitra cyanapicata* orchid (right).

Below: Tatachilla College students with DEW Ecologist, Elisa Sparrow and ForestrySA Ranger, Lennan Whiting, set up a motion detection camera in Bone Gully.



Monitoring of the Southern brown bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*) using remote infra-red sensor cameras continues in Bone Gully locality, Kuitpo Forest. The cameras are monitored through partnership with students from Tatachilla Lutheran College.

Within weeks of the cameras being installed two bandicoot sightings were captured on camera in a degraded drainage line. This finding confirms the bandicoots are using the weedy drainage line and supports the long-term conservation objective to rehabilitate the area after harvesting to improve habitat quality and linkages.

Bird surveying by Avian Monitoring Services has been undertaken in ForestrySA Biodiversity Corridors in the Green Triangle for 14 years.

The long term data collection is helpful in understanding the bird's use of corridors

and therefore invaluable in directing and guiding future corridor works. Data also provides an indicator of the state of biodiversity within the corridors.

A total of 28 sites were surveyed this year, with all birds seen or heard at the site recorded under the standardised search method. Close to 120 different bird species have been recorded and as the corridors are still forming, it is expected more bird species will be observed over the coming years.

Flora research and surveys have been undertaken along the native forest fire breaks. An ongoing program with the Native Orchid Society has uncovered the location of orchid species over 10 reserves this year. Students engaged in the Biodiversity Schools Program have undertaken threatened species education and surveys in reserves adjacent to newly established corridors. Students identify and study the ecosystems to better understand the desired outcomes of a biodiversity corridor and how they can become involved.

6.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT continued

Revegetation and rehabilitation

A community planting day was held in Mount Hayfield locality, Second Valley Forest Reserve, around Ingalalla Falls. Over 700 tubestock were planted as part of the Yankalilla Council's Festival of Nature program. Ingalalla Falls is a very popular recreation site receiving over 20,000 visitors every year. It is hoped that a grant application submitted with Yankalilla Council to improve disability access to the waterfall and install a public toilet will be successful in further enhancing the visitor experience.



Above: Community planting day at Ingalalla Falls.



Above: Glenburnie planting at Honeysuckle Corridor.

Biodiversity Corridors, Green Triangle

ForestrySA's Biodiversity Corridor Strategy has been operating since 2003 in the Green Triangle. As part of this, areas of clear-felled plantation on OneFortyOne's leased land are being revegetated to create a link between native forest reserves. The corridors help the migration of animals and plants and their genetic material. A total of 25 corridors are planned, with most now underway. Tubestock planting and direct seeding was progressed during winter in four new corridors over three localities.

The Biodiversity Schools Program engages three regional schools which are involved in monitoring, seed collection and growing and planting native plants into the corridors. Seed was collected over summer from significant plants as part of the corridor threatened plant rehabilitation plan.

Species include *Acacia suaveolens*, *Allocasuarina mackliniana* and the rare flax lily *Dianella callicarpa*, which is a species that only occurs in the Whennen and Mount McIntyre Native Forest Reserves. To support numbers and regional diversity, the threatened plants have been propagated by the schools and planted into corridors.

Community groups, Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and TafeSA students have also been involved in the rehabilitation plan for threatened species. ForestrySA also collaborates with Trees for Life for the recovery of the threatened species, *Olearia pannosa*. This has been planted within corridors located in the Mount Burr region, by DCS and community group members.

ForestrySA supported the Red-tailed black cockatoo "Kids Helping Cockies" project, undertaking seed collection and revegetation of habitat trees in the Caroline and Wandilo corridors.

Approximately 16,500 plants will be planted in corridors this year, including those grown by schools and community groups. These organisations have contributed more than 500 volunteer hours during the 2018-19 year.

6.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT continued

Swamp Gum Grassy Woodland Rehabilitation Project, Green Triangle

Revegetation and monitoring of threatened species has been undertaken in the Green Triangle's Honan's and Hackett Hill Native Forest Reserves this year. Several days were spent undertaking specialist bushcare weed control using skilled ForestrySA staff and seasonal operations team members.

Swamp gum woodland with a herbaceous understorey is one of the rarest vegetation types in the region and the project results in the protection of many threatened species including the mountain scurf-pea, matted nertera, twining glycine, slender speedwell and honan mint.

ForestrySA Schools Program, Green Triangle

The ForestrySA Biodiversity Schools Program was developed more than 10 years ago through a partnership with three regional schools - Millicent High School and the Glenburnie and Newbery Park Primary Schools.

Students are engaged in environmental learning through a range of projects, including the Biodiversity Corridors Strategy. The schools have helped establish four new corridors this year, covering three localities and 18ha. More than 15,000 native plants have been grown, with planting undertaken by students during winter. Students have also undertaken monitoring and surveys in native forest reserves and corridors, focusing on threatened species recovery.

This year, more than 1,700 students were engaged across the three schools, contributing 4,000 volunteer hours.

Pest animal control, Mount Lofty Ranges

Pest animal control recommenced on forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges in early February 2019 after a review of procedures during 2018. Most of the control efforts are undertaken by volunteers engaged as Friends of the Forest through the Sporting Shooters Association of South Australia. At Second Valley, a contractor is engaged through funding provided by Yankalilla Council.

This is a joint arrangement with the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, which allows pest animal control undertaken across forest reserves, national parks and local private lands.

Outcomes Mount Lofty Ranges pest control from February to June 2019 are - deer: 570, goats: 23, hares, rabbits and foxes: 26.

Below: Millicent High School students receiving certificates for their involvement in the Junior Ranger project.



6.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FORESTS

Mount Lofty Ranges infrastructure projects

ForestrySA forest reserves are a valuable community asset, providing a place to enjoy the environment and undertake a range of recreational activities and events.

In line with this, the ForestrySA Visitor Infrastructure Plan 2016 – 2019 identified a range of facility development projects, with commencement and completion of several projects targeted during 2018-19.

See below for more information and pictures.



Above: Installation of new interpretive signage began at campgrounds and visitor sites in the Kuitpo Forest during 2018-19. The project will continue across all ForestrySA Forest Reserves in 2019-20.



Above: The first stage of construction of new horse yards at Jack's Paddock, Kuitpo, has already attracted positive feedback from Horse SA officials and riders, for its increased safety and function.



Above: ForestrySA's three major public campgrounds - Rocky Paddock and Chalk's (Mount Crawford) and Chookarloo (Kuitpo) - have all been fitted with state-of-the-art ablution systems. The work has been welcomed by visitors. Future infrastructure planning includes similar installations at ForestrySA's forest hut facilities.



Above: Installation of the final bridge saw completion of the popular riparian board walk at Chalk's Waterhole in the Mount Crawford Forest Reserve.

6.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FORESTS continued



Above: The initial stage of frame work repair (left) and completion of the roof replacement (right) project at Woodcutter's Cottage, Kuitpo. Other external works projects are now being planned to complement an earlier interior makeover completed in 2017.



Above: The finishing touches were placed on the major kitchen refurbishment at Thomas Hill House during 2018-19.



Above: Rocky Creek Hut received a full interior and exterior make over.

Other projects completed during 2018-19 include:

- Development of a junior mountain bike trail in the Fox Creek mountain bike precinct
- Extension of the Fox Creek Road mountain bike car park
- Installation of orienteering course trail head markers in the Kuitpo Forest
- Renovations to the historic Kuitpo Forest Information Centre building adjacent to the new Kuitpo Head Office complex

6.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FORESTS continued

Event management

ForestrySA provides forest access for user groups, clubs and organisations for organised activities, including state and national level competitions, throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges forests. Of the 244 recorded events engaging a total of 54,293 people, ForestrySA hosted some popular and significant events attracting large visitor numbers during 2018-19.

BikeSA Dirty Weekend, Cudlee Creek

In late April 2019, Bike SA ran its annual 24-hour mountain bike endurance event, the Dirty Weekend. The nationally-acclaimed event attracted 1,200 competitors and spectators over two days of fun and fierce competition, within the Fox Creek mountain bike trail precinct. ForestrySA contributed to further improvements of a community event village located near Thomas Hill House.

Nature Play Forest Festival 2019, Kuitpo Forest

The Nature Play Forest Festival was held for the third successive year during the April school holidays at Rocky Creek, within Kuitpo Forest. ForestrySA was once again an event partner in collaboration with Nature Play SA, Mount Barker District Council and Alexandrina Council. This year's event was held over two days, with ticket sales indicating attendance figures of approximately 3,500 children and their families.

The festival was well promoted, with flyers and signage present at strategic locations throughout local council districts. Channel Ten News also broadcast a live nightly weather cross from the forest at the end of day one, providing further promotion of the event and the forest.

ForestrySA facilitated an information booth during the event, handing out information brochures, fridge magnets and providing general information to the public. Feedback from ForestrySA staff indicated a significant number of first-time visitors to Kuitpo Forest who expressed a desire to return and an interest in using the various forest accommodation facilities on offer. The event is a fantastic means of promoting the numerous recreational opportunities and experiences offered to families in our forest reserves.



Above: Community atmosphere during the 2019 Nature Play Forest Festival at Rocky Creek Hut, Kuitpo Forest. *Image courtesy of J. Tyndal.*



Above: Crowds flock to Chalk's Campground, Mount Crawford, during the 2019 Birdwood Farm Day.

Birdwood Farm Day, Mount Crawford Forest

The 45th annual Birdwood Farm Day was held in ForestrySA's picturesque Chalk's Campground during May 2019. The event attracted 1,300 people and was the 24th year the event was held at the campground.

The annual fundraising event is run by Birdwood Primary School parents and volunteers to assist in the purchase of new educational equipment and aids, and to complete landscaping works at the school.

Other significant events in 2018-19

- SA Trail Runners events in both Mount Crawford and Kuitpo Forests attracted up to 800 visitors each
- The Adelaide Hills Rally, part of the Australian Rally Championships, attracted 2,500 visitors to Mount Crawford Forest
- Motor bike events, including the Creat-n-Trax trilogy and Juventus Motorbike Club Sprint Competition.

6.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FORESTS continued

Ghost Mushroom Lane 2019, Green Triangle

The ghost mushroom, *Omphalotus nidiformis*, is a bioluminescent fungus that grows in large numbers throughout plantation forest in the Green Triangle. ForestrySA established Ghost Mushroom Lane as a regional visitor site in 2017.

As a winter, night-time experience, the event builds directly on Limestone Coast tourism campaign, Stay Another Day. More than 25,000 people visited the site over eight weeks during May and June 2019, with visitors coming from all over Australia and internationally.

The site is open from May to June each year and is a free walk and drive experience, where visitors can explore a number of themed walking trails or take a paid guided tour with professional guides. The site is located in OneFortyOne Plantations leased land, giving visitors a glimpse of forest recreation and industry working hand-in-hand.

ForestrySA engaged the private sector for the first time during 2019, entering into a sponsorship agreement with OneFortyOne and awarding a tour contract to Mount Gambier adventure sports provider, Reef2Ridge. ForestrySA also sought volunteer support, with more than 350 volunteer hours donated to Ghost Mushroom Lane during the season.

The site was voted as one of South Australia's top five must-see winter locations by the RAA in 2019 and was also featured on prime time Channel 9 television travel show, South Aussie with Cosi, on Sunday 30 June.

Ghost Mushroom Lane has proved important for regional tourism since it opened for the first time in 2017, providing strong social media coverage across all platforms, radio interviews, newspapers and television appearances.

Below: South Aussie with Cosi television presenter Andrew "Cosi" Costello visits Ghost Mushroom Lane with ForestrySA staff Troy Horn and Kieran Gosden.



6.3 FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

ForestrySA's industry development program focuses on projects to improve plantation productivity and sustainable management and includes establishment and assessment of field experiments and forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas.

Research programs such as demonstration trials and industry support projects continue to be managed under this CSO program.

Forestry Research Mount Gambier was established to conduct research under National Institute for Forest Products innovation (NIFPI) funding and is located at the University of South Australia campus.

NIFPI is a project-based joint funding agreement between the Australian and State Governments and the forest growing and processing industry. ForestrySA and the University of South Australia have also undertaken a number of jointly-funded projects for industry development.

NIFPI projects initiated and progressed during 2018-19 include:

- Solutions for the optimal use of dense, remotely-acquired data by forest growers
- Scoping an automated forest fire detection and suppression framework
- Development and implementation of forest health and biosecurity systems and protocols based on quantitative pest risk and economic impact assessment
- Options for operating efficiently and sustainably within forest water licence rules
- Characterisation of softwood sawn products in Australia
- Future-proofing South Australian bluegum plantations through improved detection of koalas in early planning and forestry operations
- Optimising the management of plantation, water and environmental assets
- Wearable sensor-controlled vests for health and safety hazard monitoring and early warning in forestry activities

6.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

The 2018-19 Fire Danger Season has thankfully seen minimal impact on ForestrySA assets and nearby communities. Other parts of Australia were under considerable pressure during the fire season, with fires in spring in Queensland and then during summer in Tasmania and Victoria.

While a number of South Australian firefighters were involved with interstate deployments, there was not any direct requirement from ForestrySA staff to assist with these fires.

ForestrySA continued to maintain its fire response levels throughout the Fire Danger Season and attended a number of important local incidents to prevent the spread of fire on land both within and outside its response zones.

The Fire Danger Season was extended until 12 May 2019 in the Mount Lofty Ranges, with fire crews at the ready during the extension period, which is traditionally busy due to visitors lighting illegal campfires.

ForestrySA fire reaction across the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle for fire danger season 2018-19 are below.

Mount Lofty Ranges: 1 December 2018 to 12 May 2019

Rating	Dec `18	Jan `19	Feb `19	Mar `19	Apr `19	May `19	Total reactions
Low - Moderate	6	0	0	3	6	10	25
High	14	10	15	20	14	2	75
Very High 1	5	10	5	6	4	0	30
Very High 2	0	3	4	0	2	0	9
Severe	5	7	4	0	1	0	17
Extreme	2	1	0	2	2	0	7
Catastrophic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Days	31	31	28	31	30	12	163

Green Triangle: 1 December 2018 to 30 April 2019

Rating	Dec `18	Jan `19	Feb `19	Mar `19	Apr `19	Total reactions
Low - Moderate	24	5	9	16	23	77
High	2	14	11	13	4	44
Very High 1	1	5	4	0	2	12
Very High 2	3	3	4	0	1	11
Severe	1	4	0	1	0	6
Extreme	0	0	0	1	0	1
Catastrophic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Days	31	31	28	31	30	151

ForestrySA operates seven fire towers in the Green Triangle region and one in the Mount Lofty Ranges, for early and rapid fire detection. The towers were operated for 472 hours across 81 days during the 2018-19 season, based on the risk posed by conditions throughout the fire season.

ForestrySA's Mount Lofty Ranges fire crews attended 33 fires for the season, including 10 fires on private land or land managed by other agencies. In the Green Triangle, ForestrySA fire crews attended 10 fires for the season, including nine fires on private land or land managed by other agencies.

The new Mount Lofty Ranges Head Office and operational facility was officially opened at Kuitpo during November 2018. This purpose-built facility includes a new fire operations room, wall maps and GRN radio infrastructure.

Improvements to fire rosters and availability using the BART (Broadcast, Alert, Response, Turnout) system were also achieved during 2018-19. This system will continually improve in the lead-up to the next fire season.

6.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION continued

Significant budget savings were achieved by reducing fire standby costs, consistent with our minimum reaction and response levels through the use of a Quick Response Vehicle on days of High Level 1 response. Changes were implemented to fire response and reaction levels. Improvements were made to pre-season training and staff development. Significant refurbishments were completed on one Mount Lofty Ranges FireKing and a business case prepared for improving the remaining fire fleet. Weekly fire briefings held on Monday mornings were well attended by all staff and provided a sound basis for the weekly fire reaction across all regions.

ForestrySA is a member of three fire cooperatives in the Southern Flinders Ranges and Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle regions. The cooperatives were formed in 2009 and are comprised of ForestrySA, CFS, DEW, local council and SA Water representatives. The agencies work together to develop and implement integrated prescribed burning programs, and to deliver integrated bushfire response arrangements.

ForestrySA seeks to manage or control all wildfires within or threatening its forest assets, including plantations established on SA Water land, and to contain burnt areas by separating burnt from unburnt fuels. ForestrySA achieves this by:

- Maintaining suitable and serviceable equipment including a fleet of fire tankers, bulk water carriers and other fire equipment which are strategically stationed to react to incidents
- Maintaining sufficient numbers of fit and trained personnel
- Applying suitable cost-effective techniques
- Pre-planning organisation and support of rapid initial attack and ongoing fire operations
- Cooperating and coordinating with other organisations safely and efficiently through effective training, leadership, communications and support
- Ensuring all forest firebreaks and fire access tracks are established and maintained in accordance with required standards
- Operating seven fire towers across the Green Triangle and one in the Mount Lofty Ranges, assisting in rapid fire detection
- Operating an electronic lightning detection system

Below: ForestrySA fire staff and appliances at Kuitpo.



6.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION continued

Prescribed burning

ForestrySA completed one prescribed burn operation in Mount Lofty Ranges in spring 2018 covering 8.3ha. A further three spring burns were planned, but due to unfavourable weather conditions were rescheduled to be completed in autumn 2019. Between the regions of the Green Triangle and the Mount Lofty Ranges, six autumn 2019 planned burns were not conducted due to unsuitable weather conditions. Planning was well underway for these burns, including adequate resourcing, but unfortunately they were unable to be executed due to these concerns.

Below: Prescribed burn operations underway at Knott's Hill during October 2018. This 8.3ha burn was achieved within prescription and aligned with the operations plan, adhering to strategic and environmental outcomes.



6.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS

ForestrySA continued to support implementation of the Mid North Forests Future Strategy, including ongoing recreational access, trails development and facilitation of grazing. There will be reduced involvement in Wirrabara and Bundaleer forests in the future.

Some contribution to fire protection still remains a responsibility of ForestrySA in the form of pre-Fire Danger Season checks to ensure leaseholders have adequately addressed the required fire protection maintenance.

At Wirrabara Forest's Mount Ellen locality, ForestrySA has supported and contributed to the planting and development of a Manuka trial by Spring Gully for the production of Manuka honey.

A major renovation of the historic forester's residence and office is complete, with ForestrySA having handed over management of the Wirrabara Forest Headquarters, picnic and camping grounds and native forest reserves to DEW.

A caretaker agreement between ForestrySA and the Bundaleer Forest Community Areas Association is being considered for upkeep of the Bundaleer Picnic Ground and surrounding interpretive trails and infrastructure, ensuring continued public access to this popular recreational area.

7. KEY STATISTICS

ForestrySA reports CSO activities and community interaction to PIRSA on a quarterly basis.

The tables below summarise the activities undertaken across the Mount Lofty Ranges, Green Triangle and Mid North regions.

7.1 NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Native forest conservation	Total area of Gazetted Native Forest Reserve	Maintained or increased area	16,059ha
Assess and extend biodiversity and heritage values	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes and reviewed	Works plan achieved and reviewed	Yes
Pest plant and animal control	Relevant actions progressed from Forest Management Plans	>75% of scheduled actions complete	Yes Achieved priority actions from forest management plans
	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works reviewed	Yes Participated in co-ordinated regional control initiatives for pest and plant animal control
Provision of natural history information to the public	Native Forest Reserve resource documents available online	All completed documents available. Some documents not finalised	Yes
	Public events	2	Yes Four presentations to schools and three field trips
Prescribed burning primarily for ecological purposes	Areas planned, scheduled and burnt	No specified target	Three autumn burns in the Green Triangle which have been identified as priorities in Native Forest Reserve management
Collaboration for landscape scale outcomes	Representation on peak groups Completed documentation made available	10 groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Red-tailed black cockatoo Liaison 2. South Para Biodiversity Project 3. Living Flinders Planning Committee and Feral Control Working Group 4. Mount Lofty Ranges Fleurieu Swamps and Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren Recovery Program 5. Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery Program 6. Mount Lofty Ranges Threatened Orchid Recovery Program 7. South Para Natural Resources Management Committee 8. Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Committee 9. Mount Lofty Ranges – Mountain Biking Trails - Destination 10. Recreation SA - Trails Forum 11. Mount Lofty Ranges Trails Working Group Walking SA and Adelaide Hills Council 12. Reinvigorating the Heysen Trail – Fleurieu Peninsula 13. Barossa BC and Para Wirra Trails Working Groups 14. Red-tailed black cockatoo – Kids Helping Cockies engagement 15. Southern Bent-Wing Bat Recovery Team meeting 16. SE Tourism Industry Meetings and presentations

7.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Provision of a range of permitted non-commercial activities			Camping: 3,746 Horse riding (day): 107 Horse riding (year): 177 Fossicking (day): 414 Fossicking (year): 88 Firewood: 48 Cave diving: 2,462 Other: 415 Total permits issued: 7,397 Total number of people covered by permits: 59,401 Number of Events: 244 People engaged: 54,293
	Website shows activities available	Website up to date	Yes
Public usage	Visitors recorded	>150,000	Visitor numbers recorded from permits issued and people / vehicle counters in targeted high-traffic areas. This includes the Green Triangle, which attracted an additional estimated 25,000 to Ghost Mushroom Lane. Total visitors: 263,522 (Total number excludes regular daily visitors where permits are not issued. For example, school group hikes, general walkers and cyclists etc.)
Opportunities for community engagement	Stakeholder consultation for CSO-related activities	Stakeholder feedback received	Yes Stakeholder feedback is received from a variety of community interest and user groups, relating to forest event and activities and general forest management.
Diversity of community groups involved	Number of different community groups engaged	>20	Interaction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Agencies, Volunteer groups • Friends of the Forests, Schools • Bike SA • Orienteering SA • Friends of Heysen Trail • Friends of Kaiserstuhl • TAFE • K and H (intellectually disabled) • Youth Justice • Correctional Services
Rangers available for compliance, facilitation, education and support	Conservation and recreation staff employed	5 FTE	Yes

7.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES continued

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
A system of monitoring use in compliance with the Forestry Regulations 2013	Number of compliance incidents	No specified target set for this period	<p>Recorded offences: 55 This includes both offence reports and verbal warnings.</p> <p>Of these, 21 expiations were issued, including three by South Australia Police under the <i>Road Traffic Act 1961</i>.</p> <p>Offences included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of vegetation • Unauthorised vehicle access (motorbikes and 4WDs) • Prohibition of entry at night • Lighting of fires in reserve • Illegal firearms • Reported non-compliance incidences included: • Unauthorised vehicle access • Numerous fence breaks and damage to gates and other infrastructure • Depositing of rubbish • Firewood theft from Native Reserves • Injured wildlife by unauthorised shooting and other • Theft of portable toilet trailer • Theft of CFS pump at SV airstrip • Use of firearms in public campgrounds including bows, crossbows and air rifles <p>ForestrySA Compliance Rangers are trialling body camera technology to capture incidents of non-compliance. Trail cameras are also in use in strategic locations to gather evidence.</p>
Volunteer hours attributed to community engagement programs	Hours	>10 000	<p>9,625 Recorded volunteer hours including the South East (5,871 hours).</p>
<p>Comments from the community with regard to community use</p> <p>Promotion of conservation and recreation events</p>	Media coverage	No specified target	Media coverage of many events held on ForestrySA land throughout the year.

7.2 COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES continued

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Projects to address visitor management and upgrade facilities	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	<p>Program developed, achieved and reviewed</p> <p>Upgrades to picnic and campgrounds</p> <p>Advertise and promote upgrades through publications</p> <p>Website updates</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Visitor Infrastructure Plan implementation of identified projects for upgrade facilities across the Mount Lofty Ranges.</p> <p>Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of junior bike trail at the Fox Creek mountain bike precinct • Extension of Fox Creek car park • Roof replaced on Woodcutter's Cottage • External and internal renovation to Rocky Creek Hut • External repairs and reconnection of bore water backup to Thomas Hill House • New toilet facilities at three major campgrounds • Stage one construction of new horse yards at Jack's Paddock • Installation of trail heads for orienteering courses in Kuitpo Forest • Commencement installation of new locality signs at facilities <p>Planned 2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External and internal renovation of the Old School House • Renovation of Fromm's Farm • Bathroom upgrades at Thomas Hill House • Continued rollout of new locality sign banks across the Mount Lofty Ranges • Updated infrastructure program for the Green Triangle, including construction of Lake Edward car park and trail, and upgrade of Hell's Hole trails • Updated maintenance program for Green Triangle recreational sites implemented

7.3 FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
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	Two field days per year Provide information to appropriate parties on request Update web pages on forestry research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held with Green Triangle plantation and processing industry and researchers as part of drafting of National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) to confirm industry research needs and priorities. • Field and processor visits made and workshops held as part of undertaking NIFPI projects to discuss and develop detailed NIFPI work programs to industry requirements. • Industry presentations made and reports circulated for ForestrySA/UniSA funded projects. • Participation of UniSA in Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan Science Review and risk assessment process. • UniSA researcher field visit in the Mount Lofty Ranges to discuss current and potential projects with ForestrySA staff. Includes discussions with SA Water regarding joint projects with ForestrySA associated with plantations in water catchments. • Hosting the national Softwood Timber Technical Committee meeting at UniSA Mawson Lakes for inspection of structural testing facilities, presentation of relevant project research areas and discussion of national structural timber testing project.
Forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas are managed consistent with management plans developed by PIRSA	Agreed annual works programs (Gumeracha, Wandilo, Bundaleer)	Agreed annual works program	Yes Review and action plan developed. Portions of the Gumeracha demonstration area destroyed have been converted to production plantation areas

7.4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Contribution to state wide or landscape scale fire protection initiatives	State Bushfire Coordination Committee Bushfire Management Committee meetings Regional Fire Cooperative Meeting Country Fire Service	80% attendance Operational works program achieved Staff available and trained to agreed standard of fire cover	Yes Staff received the relevant training as per ForestrySA manual for response to fire. Meetings attended: 1. Heads of Agencies (Fire Management on Public Lands) 2. Mount Lofty Ranges Fire Cooperative 3. South East Fire Cooperative 4. Southern Flinders Ranges Fire Cooperative 5. Bushfire Management Committee Meetings, Green Triangle, Mount Lofty Ranges and Mid North 6. SBCC Ecological Technical Reference Group meetings 7. Collaborative Fire Planning committee for Fleurieu Peninsula
Contribution to regional fire suppression	Fires attended by ForestrySA on lands other than Forest Reserves	Number of fires	Mount Lofty Ranges: 10 Green Triangle: 9
		Support provided to CFS – IMT, response	None required
Prescribed burning primarily undertaken for fuel reduction	Areas planned, scheduled and burnt	75% by area of scheduled burns achieved over three-year period	ForestrySA completed one prescribed burn in the Mount Lofty Ranges during spring 2018, covering 8.3ha. A further three spring burns were planned, but due to unfavourable weather conditions were rescheduled to be completed as part of the autumn 2019 program. Unsuitable weather conditions prevented six autumn burns from taking place in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Green Triangle, despite adequate planning and resources.
Community engagement	Media coverage	Two media releases	Both positive and negative commentary received regarding burning operations. Media release 1: Prescribed burning in the Mount Lofty Ranges – residue burning Media release 2: Fire Danger Season at an end in the Mount Lofty Ranges Media release 3: Prescribed burning for autumn in Second Valley Reserve – ForestrySA website

7.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOME
Support transition to new management arrangements	<p>Administration of Crown Leases and Forest Licences</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of heritage, recreation and other community values at the Bundaleer Picnic Grounds</p> <p>Increased community capability and capacity to manage the Bundaleer Picnic Ground</p> <p>Direct management of other lands and activities to achieve alternative management arrangements</p>	No specified target	<p>Leases and licences administered, including pre-fire danger season checks of leases to ensure compliance with fire protection requirements.</p> <p>A caretaker agreement with the Bundaleer Forest Community Areas Association is being considered for the upkeep of the Bundaleer Picnic Ground.</p>

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