



**FORESTRYSA
COMMUNITY FOREST
MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**



FOREWORD



Image: ForestrySA staff with Kaurna elder, Uncle Tamaru, at Kuitpo Forest

This report summarises non-commercial activities during the period 2020-21, known as Community Service Obligations (CSO), funded via ForestrySA's purchasing arrangement with the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Treasurer.

In 2020-21, funding for ForestrySA's community services obligations maintained native forest management, community fire protection, community use of the forest estate, programs for industry development and management of the Mid North Forests.

2020-21 was a successful year for community services and ForestrySA forest reserves continued to be a highly valued community asset, in the wake of and continued disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A new visitor estimation model indicated a significant increase in the scope of use of the forest estate with over 450,000 visitors during the year. ForestrySA was also overwhelmed with event applications and a limit was introduced to ensure sustainable administration and forest management.

This highlighted the importance of the natural forest environment for social and mental health and wellbeing, as well as for a range of recreational activities and events, and research and conservation.

ForestrySA has successfully delivered key performance indicators across the community services obligations, on time and within budget. Whilst great outcomes have been achieved through the most efficient and effective use of the available funding, work commenced to better understand the full scope of activities required, to better understand public use and expectation, and to ensure outcomes from current investments are sustained.

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

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INTRODUCTION

ForestrySA manages:

- The State-owned commercial plantations in the Mount Lofty Ranges
- Native forest reserves and recreational access to OneFortyOne plantations in the Green Triangle and,
- Areas of native vegetation (most of which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserve) within Mount Lofty Ranges and the Green Triangle (Limestone Coast).

In addition to its commercial activities, and in accordance with its Charter, ForestrySA undertakes 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
- Community protection (including fire)
- Forestry industry development
- Management of the Mid North Forests

Image: Walking in the forest



1. NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

1. NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

ForestrySA's native forest management program supports the management of native vegetation on ForestrySA 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 Australian Indigenous and European heritage sites which provide connections between people, events and our estate.

“During 2020-21, ForestrySA managed approximately 25,000 hectares of native forest and other areas of natural features.

This includes 16,500ha, which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserves under the *Forestry Act 1950*.

KEY OUTCOMES

- 10,000ha across 83 locations, treated for weeds
- 1,454 goats removed from the Cudlee Creek fire recovering landscape, during two operations
- Fox control across 15 reserves in the Limestone Coast and feral deer in five reserves in the Reedy Creek Range
- New population of the regionally endangered guinea flower, *Hibbertia hirsuta*, discovered within Bells Gully Forest Reserve
- 13 forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges included in the nationally vulnerable bassian thrush, *Zoothera iunulata*, survey
- Four lines of permanent pitfall traps at Bagdad Native Forest Reserve surveyed for small mammals and reptiles
- Three red-tailed black-cockatoo recovery programs carried out across five sites and one at a threatened plant site, *Dianella callicarpa*, in the Limestone Coast
- Supported research into moonmilk in Snowflake Cave with La Trobe University and the Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDAA)
- Four ecological and asset protection prescribed burns, treating 24ha. This included one specific ecological burn carried out across 6.3ha at the Boat Harbour forest location, Second Valley Forest Reserve.

Image: Coralinga Native Forest Reserve



2. COMMUNITY FORESTRY



2. COMMUNITY FORESTRY

“ForestrySA managed land provides the setting for a wide range of recreation activities across sustainable, multi-use forests.”

The Community Forestry program enhances the visitor experience by providing and maintaining a range of visitor facilities, providing educational activities, information materials and opportunities, managing and permitting forest use and events, compliance activities, and visitor management.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Amendments made to Forestry Regulations 2013
- New fee structure for first time in 20 years
- 15 new dog on-lead zones to improve community awareness and address public safety concerns

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

- \$2.5m grant funding received from State and Commonwealth, through National Disaster Resilience Program, to rebuild Fox Creek Bike Park
- \$230,000 approved by Reservoir Taskforce for new hike-in campground at Kersbrook Forest Reserve
- \$40,000 invested to deliver new car park, interpretive signs, picnic table, maps and walking trails at Dry Creek
- Improved visitor and safety signage at recreation caves and cave diving sites
- \$5,000 funding allocated to Gravity Enduro South Australia to develop two new bike trails at Bennett’s Forest Reserve, matching grant from Responsible Wood® Small Grants. Visit www.responsiblewood.org.au/the-bennetts-trails-a-story-of-resilience-collaboration-and-blister/ to read more.
- New multi-use Onkeeta Trail and a section of the Willunga Basin Trail installed in Kuitpo Forest
- New signage at information centres and popular visitor sites such as Ingalalla Falls, Fox Creek Bike Park, Kersbrook Bike Trails, Bennett’s Reserve and Jack’s Paddock Campground
- Six new picnic sites at Chookarloo and The Avenues
- Repairs to Thomas Hill House after the 2019 Cudlee Creek Bushfire and upgrades to the Rocky Creek and Tinjella Huts in Kuitpo Forest
- Upgrades to the Mount Crawford Information Centre
- Repairs and upgrades to horse riding facilities including Tinjella Hut and Jack’s Paddock horse yards, and Rocky Creek and Knott’s Hill carparks.
- A new fee structure implemented for Cave Diving in the Limestone Coast for the first time.

Image: New infrastructure at the Dry Creek Walking Trails



2. COMMUNITY FORESTRY continued

EVENTS

“More than 240 events were held in forests across the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast during 2020-21.”

- 10,000 visitors and 1,000 access passes sold for Ghost Mushroom Lane
- Reference to Ghost Mushroom Lane in the CSIRO's 2021 publication *Wild Mushrooming; A Guide for Foragers*, in what is likely to be Australia's first example of myco-tourism
- 20th anniversary of the Bike SA Dirty Weekend, held at Fox Creek Bike Park
- Fourth Nature Play Forest Festival held at Rocky Creek Hut, Kuitpo
- 112 University, TAFESA, school and kindy camps, excursions and outdoor education courses in the Mount Lofty Ranges
- 13 registered military, police and emergency services training events held within Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast forest reserves
- Launch of Mortal Kombat Hollywood film, which featured the Mount Crawford Forest in the first 7 minutes
- Run for Rangers Fun Run held at Kuitpo Forest in partnership with the South Australian Ranger Association, raising more than \$5,000 for the Thin Green Line Foundation.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

- Four schools and 1,500 participants involved in ForestrySA's Schools program, including school educational days, Aboriginal cultural activities, field days and revegetation
- 12,410 hours volunteered by Friends of the Forests
- A new home base for Heroes on the Homefront, at Bennett's Forest Reserve, Mount Crawford.

Image: The Run for Rangers Fun Run charity event at Kuitpo Forest



2. COMMUNITY FORESTRY continued

ENGAGEMENT



Facebook reach up by 1,800% in 2020-21



Instagram launched May 2021, with engagement quickly building

- ForestrySA's growing social media presence is a key communication platform, providing meaningful engagement with forest visitors, and connection with fellow land managers, government, business and stakeholders.
- ForestrySA website regularly updated with current information for forest visitors and stakeholders
- Regular communication with local media, regarding community forestry developments and other topics of interest
- Social media competitions, such as a forest photography competition, encouraging community engagement
- ForestrySA presence at the Walking SA Hiking Expo and Lobethal Fire Expo

Image: Reopening ride at the Fox Creek Bike Park, 11 April 2021. Courtesy of Anita Smith



2. COMMUNITY FORESTRY continued

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

467,870

Forest visitors recorded during 2020-21.
An increase of 221% on the previous period

24,800

people attended events and activities on ForestrySA land

18,500

permits administered for forest activities such as camping, horse riding, fossicking and caving

48,000

visitors to Ingalalla Falls and a redevelopment plan lodged with the District Council of Yankalilla for improved facilities

34,447

people went camping in a ForestrySA campground during 2020-21, up by 185%

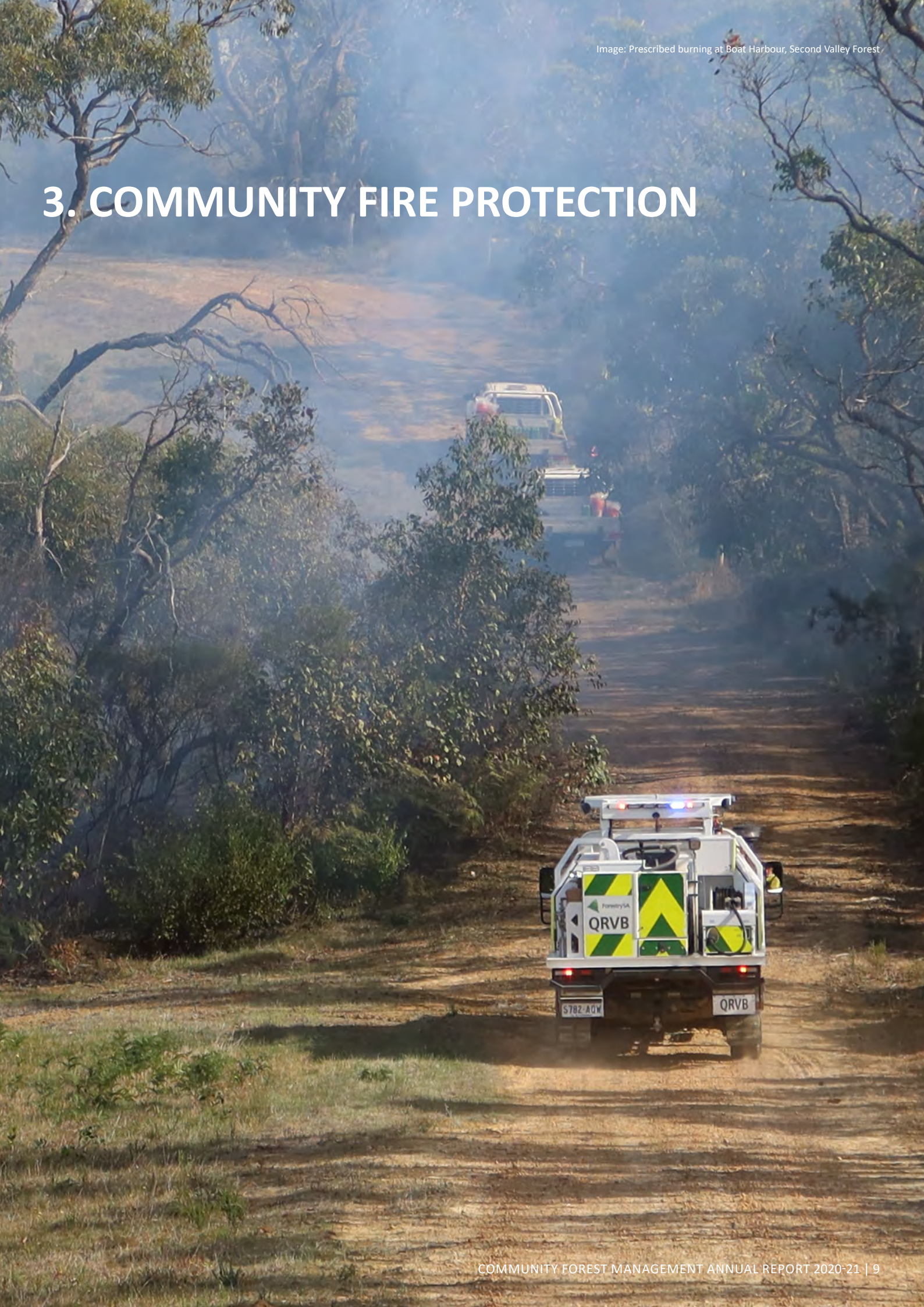
Illegal Firewood Strategy

launched, focusing on native and red gum forests near Penola

146

Compliance matters dealt with formally. Rangers also spoke with a further 119 people located in the forest illegally during a Total Fire Ban

3. COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION



3. COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

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

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

KEY OUTCOMES

- Delivery of actions from the Independent Review into South Australia's 2019-20 Bushfire Season (the Keelty Review) with a focus on the Automated Vehicle Location (ALV) project and improvements to Incident Management Teams, including identifying suitably trained and qualified forest industry professionals to assist with decision making
- Contributed to the development of the new State Bushfire Management Plan
- Completed a fire tower network infrastructure assessment, to identify safety and structural issues related to fire detection services for forest industry and communities in the Green Triangle and implemented a maintenance program
- In partnership with the local forest industry and university, an investigation commenced into alternative fire detection strategies and technologies
- Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development announced an investment of \$1.1m of ForestrySA funds to upgrade fire surveillance and prevention across forestry assets in the South East of South Australia, over two years. ForestrySA consulted closely with industry to deliver fire tower maintenance, detection services, and new technology during this period
- Signed a Memorandum of Administrative Agreement with DEW for service delivery of fire and land management activities in the Limestone Coast for 2021-22 season
- Four prescribed burns completed across 24ha in Second Valley Forest Reserve, for both ecological outcomes and asset protection
- Responded to 17 fires across the Mount Lofty Ranges and assisted with three fires in the Green Triangle

Image: ForestrySA fire crews take a break during a burn operation



4. FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

4. 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.”

ForestrySA also supports the establishment of a regional Forestry Industry Research Centre in Mount Gambier, established in a bid to compete for National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) funding.

NIFPI funding is used for local forest industry supported and nationally important projects as selected by a South Australian based industry committee. It 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 several joint funded projects, predominantly aimed at supporting innovative ideas that, if successful, may lead to more substantial research and development projects benefiting industry development.

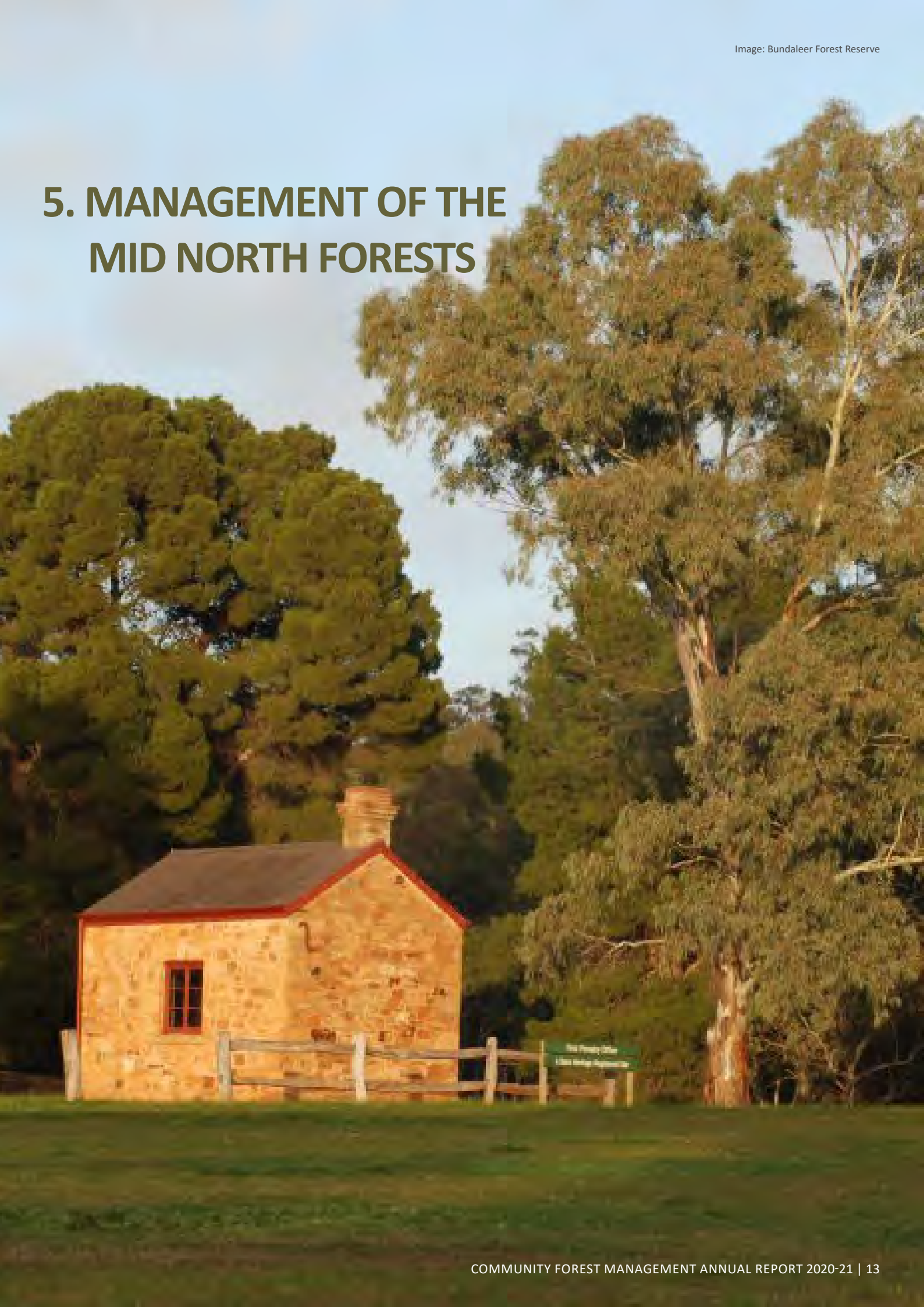
KEY OUTCOMES

- Solutions for the optimal use of remotely acquired, high resolution data by the forestry sector
- Scoping an Automated Forest Fire Detection and Suppression Framework for the Green Triangle
- 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
- Development of best-practice fatigue management for the Australian Forestry Industry
- Characterising softwood sawn products in Australia
- Optimising the management of plantation, water, and environmental assets
- Wearable Sensors for Improving Occupational Health and Safety of Workers in the Forestry Industry: A Pilot Prototype for Harvesting and Processing Operations.
- For more information, visit the NIFPI website at www.nifpi.org.au

Image: Pine plantation



5. MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS



5. MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS

ForestrySA provides land and fire management obligations to the remaining forest reserves in the Mid North and works with PIRSA to facilitate freeholding of Crown Leases in the Mid North forest areas. Surplus land of approximately 1000 hectares which has not been sold or leased is under consideration for disposal and/or future alternative uses.

Most of this area is currently covered by a grazing licence which provides some financial return and assists ForestrySA with fire management by reducing fuel loads.

KEY OUTCOMES

- ForestrySA continued to support the transition to new management arrangements for the Mid North Forests, primarily through a caretaker agreement with the Bundaleer Forest Community Areas Association (BFCAA).
- Funding for new trail posts and signs, interpretative signage, a bore license, and additional fire prevention works.
- In June 2021, new event centre, Maple & Pine, was officially launched, heralding a new beginning for the Bundaleer Forest Reserve under custodianship of the BFCAA.
- A caretaker agreement was established with the BFCAA to assist the local community to maintain links with the Bundaleer Picnic Ground. For more information, visit www.mybundaleer.com/bundaleer-visitor-event-centre
- Facilitated Spring Gully Foods Manuka Honey trial site
- Facilitated work to the Heysen and Mawson Trails
- Undertook pre-fire season works including fire track clearing and slashing on land under direct management.
- Undertook inspection of leased areas to ensure lease holders are compliant with pre-fire season works.

Image: New event centre Maple & Pine, at the Bundaleer at Bundaleer Forest Reserve Courtesy of the Bundaleer Forest Community Areas Association



6. GOVERNANCE

7. POLICY FRAMEWORK



6. GOVERNANCE

ForestrySA operates in accordance with:

- **The South Australian Forestry Corporation Charter**

This outlines ForestrySA's strategic commercial direction (commercial operations) and community service obligations (CSO) 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**

This 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**

This allows ForestrySA to fulfil its statutory functions to be a business enterprise.

- **A Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement (MoAA)**

This identifies the services ForestrySA will deliver with the CSO funding it receives and describes specific reporting requirements. This MoAA is an agreement between ForestrySA and Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA).

7. POLICY FRAMEWORK

ForestrySA's activities are undertaken in accordance with its Policy for Sustainable Forest Management.

ForestrySA is committed to sustainable forest management and will systematically, sustainably and safely manage its forests in a manner that is environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable.

The policy seeks to:

- Provide the framework for Sustainable Forest Management practices, processes, systems and review
- Optimise economic, environmental, social and cultural values of forests and lands
- Improve organisational performance and forest management outcomes while ensuring we understand and deliver to the expectations of customers, stakeholders and the community.

ForestrySA's Policy for Sustainable Forest Management is available at www.forestrysa.com.au/plantation-forestry

Image: A field trip to Little Mount Crawford Native Forest Reserve



ForestrySA

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