



**FORESTRYSA
COMMUNITY FOREST
MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

ForestrySA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia on which we live and work.

This includes the land of the Kurna, Peramangk, Ngarrindjeri and Boandik people.

We pay respect to them, their cultures and contributions, and to Elders past, present and emerging and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our organisation and across Australia.

We recognise their ongoing spiritual connection to the land, waters and community.

Always was, always will be.

Reconciliation matters greatly to ForestrySA because of who we are and what we do.

Almost 150 years ago back in 1875, our organisation was established to plant trees for sustainable wood production to reduce land clearance practices which were occurring at the time and to conserve areas of remaining native vegetation.

These early efforts to better care for the land have contributed to a movement of balancing the protection of native vegetation and sustainable plantation forestry across the landscape of South Australia.

Working with and on Country is what we do.



FOREWORD



Image: ForestrySA's Ranger team in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

This report summarises non-commercial activities during the period 2021-22, 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 2021-22, ForestrySA's community services program maintained native forest management, community fire protection, community use of the forest estate and management of the Mid North Forests.

A key component of ForestrySA's non-commercial activities is facilitating public access for visitors to South Australia's forest reserves. As a public land manager, maintaining natural assets and their intrinsic cultural values is critical. Visitor experiences are enhanced by quality facilities, and the maintenance of these.

With visitor numbers rising rapidly, ForestrySA has completed upgrades to several camping and toilet facilities at Mount Crawford and Kuitpo Forests.

Critical services provided by ForestrySA in 2021-22 included the provision of community fire protection, beyond that required for the protection of commercial plantations.

ForestrySA's capabilities in plantation forest and bushland fire protection remain highly valued by our neighbours and local communities.

During the 2021-22 year, ForestrySA maintained responsibilities for the management of around 16,000ha of native forest reserves for conservation and recreation. Under its Responsible Wood® certification, ForestrySA undertook specific ecological monitoring and reporting to protect the high conservation values attributable to these areas, often with assistance from volunteers.

The economic impacts associated with community participation in forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges was quantified through independent research in 2021. Given the direct and indirect downstream activity generated within the regional economy by visitor expenditure, the total impacts were estimated at \$7.8m in gross regional product (GRP) and 130 full-time equivalent jobs in the previous year. This equates to a return for government of between \$7 and \$8 for each dollar invested in ForestrySA's funded community service obligation programs into the local economy, in addition to the employment benefits.

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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 CSO for which it receives funding from the South Australian Government.

The CSO program supports:

- Native forest management
- Community use of forest reserves
- Community fire protection
- Management of the Mid North Forests (unfunded CSO)

Image: Fox Creek Bike Park riders stop to appreciate the recovering Cudlee Creek Forest landscape. Courtesy of Jack Fletcher.



1. NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

25,000ha

Of native forest and
natural features under
ForestrySA
management

2,272ha

of weed control
completed

60,000 hours

volunteered to the South
East Biodiversity Corridors
project since 2003

**INTER-AGENCY
COLLABORATION**

for targeted feral
animal control

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 2021-22, ForestrySA managed approximately 25,000ha of native forest and other areas of natural features in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast (Green Triangle).”

This includes 16,055ha which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserves under the *Forestry Act 1950*.

KEY OUTCOMES

- 60,000 volunteer hours committed to South East Biodiversity Corridors since its commencement in 2003
- Celebrating 14 years of the Schools Biodiversity Program in the Limestone Coast
- Aboriginal cultural activities held in ForestrySA's Green Triangle forests throughout the year, involving First Nations people and their descendants at several sites across the Limestone Coast district
- Weed control across 982ha in the Mount Lofty Ranges, prioritising areas of high conservation value
- 260 nationally-endangered *Thelymitra cyanapicata* orchids planted at Knott Hill and Meadow Flat in the Mount Lofty Ranges
- 323 feral goats, six deer and three sheep removed from Cudlee Creek Forest Reserve's fire-recovering landscape, as part of a collaborative inter-agency control effort
- 230 deer removed from the wider Mount Lofty Ranges forest area by volunteers, as they continue their important role in feral animal control
- 660 deer removed from Limestone Coast forests and public land as part of the Landscape SA Feral Deer Aerial Control Program
- 1,290ha of native vegetation treated for weeds across six Native Forest Reserves and biodiversity corridors in the Limestone Coast, with focus on blackberry, wild pine and wattle

Image: Touring the Cudlee Creek Forest fire recovery area months on from the devastating 2019 bushfire.



2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

100%
increase in
forest visitors
recorded

13,350
permits issued
for forest
activities

212
organised
forest events and
activities, attended by
17,400 people

8,300
volunteer hours

300%
increase in visits
to Fox Creek
Bike Park

87%
increase in visitors
to Ingalalla Falls

10,000
visitors to Ghost
Mushroom Lane

**Karawirra-tya-illa
Campground**
established in Old
Kersbrook
Forest

2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

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

“Our team managed public access and nature-based recreation across more than 32,291ha of forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast, and a further 88,000ha of plantation land under lease arrangement in the Limestone Coast.”

ForestrySA's 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

- 1,030,359 forest visitors were recorded in 2021-22, more than twice the number recorded the previous year
- New Karrawirra-tya-illa Campground established in Old Kersbrook Forest, blessed with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by a Peramangk-Kurna Elder. The facility will open in time for the 2023 walking season
- Wilampa Trail and Jones Journey multi-use trails opened in Second Valley Forest

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

- Installation of a new toilet block at Chookarloo Campground
- Redesign of sites in Chalks Campground to better accommodate trailers and caravans
- Redesign and stonemasonry work at Rossiter's Hut on Heysen Trail in partnership with Friends of the Heysen Trail through a Responsible Wood® grant
- Installation of signage and step-overs to open the Wilampa Trail and Jones Journey multi-use trails in Second Valley Forest, in partnership with the District Council of Yankalilla
- Repairs to the Rocky Paddock Campground
- Visitor and safety signage at recreation caves and cave diving sites
- Redesign of Native Forest Reserve totem signs
- New car park, interpretive signs, picnic table, maps and walking trails at Dry Creek Native Forest Reserve

Image: The new hike-in Karrawirra-tya-illa Campground established in Old Kersbrook Forest.



2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

VISITORS AND EVENTS

“A total of 212 events were held in forests across the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast during 2020-21, attended by 17,400 people.”

- 10,000 visitors and 1,000 access passes sold for Ghost Mushroom Lane during May and June. A further 1,600 enquiries from potential visitors were also responded to
- Many large forest events held including the DownDuro at Fox Creek Bike Park as part of the Festival of Cycling, Race at the Ressie, Nature Play SA's Forest Festival Kuitpo Wirra Inparri, the Ultra Series 100km and a Trail Running SA event at Mount Misery
- Run for Rangers Fun Run held in Kuitpo Forest in partnership with the South Australian Ranger Association, raising funds for the Thin Green Line Foundation
- 160,000 visits to Fox Creek Bike Park were recorded during 2021-22, up from 40,000 the previous year, representing an increase of 300%. Two commercial shuttles were operational most weekends and a number of large-scale trail running and bike events held
- 75,000 people visited Ingalalla Falls during 2021-22, up 87.5% on the previous year when 40,000 were recorded

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

- Four Limestone Coast schools continued their involvement in ForestrySA's Schools Biodiversity Program, which has been running for 14 years. Students took part in a range of school educational days, Aboriginal cultural activities, field days and forest planting and revegetation days
- Launch of The Koala Food Project, a volunteering initiative organised in collaboration with Cleland Wildlife Park to provide food for the park's koala population, while maintaining ForestrySA's Kuitpo Koala Gum Plantation
- ForestrySA Ranger Kieran Gosden was awarded the 2021 Richard Stanton Award, which recognises individuals who have contributed significantly to either forest management or chain of custody certification under the Responsible Wood certification scheme. Kieran was recognised for her involvement with BirdLifeOz in preserving the endangered red-tailed black cockatoo, establishing biodiversity corridors and her involvement with the Ghost Mushroom Lane and dry cave experience initiatives in the Limestone Coast region

Image: Collecting gum leaves and branches from Kuitpo Forest for koalas at Cleland Wildlife Park, as part of the Koala Food Project. Courtesy of Cleland Wildlife Park.



2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

FOX CREEK BIKE PARK

Fox Creek Bike Park, at Cudlee Creek Forest Reserve, has been developed further during a major rebuild phase and continues to attract local and visiting mountain biking enthusiasts.

The \$2.5m project, co-funded by the Commonwealth and South Australian governments under the National Bushfire Recovery Fund, has transformed the precinct since the devastating Cudlee Creek fires in December 2019.

Works completed in 2020-21 include new and improved facilities such as a new trail hub at the park's summit with a kiosk, shuttle drop off and pick up facilities, skills coaching and practice areas, improved parking and emergency response access, and business activation pop-up sites.

“The Fox Creek Bike Park rebuild has delivered 26km of re-opened tracks and 25 improved or new trails, including South Australia's first adaptive mountain bike trail, specifically created to provide for a broader range of abilities.”

The rebuild has created opportunities for new and existing local businesses including trail builders, construction companies, merchandise, bike hire and shuttle service providers.

Visitation in 2021-22 increased dramatically to 160,000 visitors - up 300% on the previous year.

Fox Creek Bike Park is ideally positioned to host both national and international events, attracting visitors who will boost the local and State economy and promote further growth.

Image: Mountain bike riders at Fox Creek Bike Park. Courtesy of Fletcher Media.



2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

ENGAGEMENT

- ForestrySA's strong social media presence continued in 2021-22, providing a powerful communication tool and enabling meaningful engagement with forest visitors, and connection with fellow land managers, government, business and stakeholders.
- ForestrySA website content and layout was reviewed and restructured during the year to better meet demand from potential forest visitors, following an influx of enquiries and commonly asked questions primarily related to community forest use.
- Media interest in recreational access and infrastructure, community initiatives and environmental work continued during 2021-22, highlighting the growing understanding and interest in what we do.
- Formal media responses were provided for around 20 media enquiries, many relating to community forestry initiatives, with interviews conducted with radio, newspaper and online outlets.



FACEBOOK

User reach: 89,316



INSTAGRAM

User reach: 4,399



WEBSITE

Users: 132,143

- ForestrySA was an event partner for the Walking SA Hiking Expo at Belair National Park and hosted the Walk for a Veteran with PTSD with Heroes on the Homefront.
- Staff also assisted with and supported community events such as Nature Play SA's Forest Festival Kuitpo Wirra Inparri and the Nature Festival, and attended the 2022 Tour Down Under Festival of Cycling and the Adelaide Hills Council "Discover, Play, Bikeway!" event, Happy Valley Reservoir opening and much more.
- ForestrySA held a walk to Lone Gum in December 2021, commemorating the second anniversary of the Cudlee Creek fire. The event was attended by hundreds of local people as they continued to recover from the bushfires which devastated their local area. The tree which inspired this event has survived at least three devastating bushfires over the last century. Sitting on top of a hill overlooking the forest, it is viewed as a beacon of hope and symbol of resilience by many.

Image: Hell's Hole, Limestone Coast. Courtesy of Ockert le Roux.



3. COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

\$1.1M

investment in fire
preparedness and
protection in the
Limestone Coast

34 fires

attended by
ForestrySA fire
crews

**216,000L
water tanks**

installed in Mount Lofty
Ranges forests for improved
communal emergency
water access

**PRESCRIBED
BURNING**

conducted in the Mount
Lofty Ranges and
Limestone Coast

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

- \$1.1M Advanced Fire Protection Action Plan completed, enhancing fire preparedness and protection in the Limestone Coast
- 33 fires responded to in the Mount Lofty Ranges and one in the Limestone Coast (Green Triangle)
- Slash burning reduced fuel hazards across 700ha in the Mount Lofty Ranges during autumn
- Two prescribed burns completed across 29ha in Watts Gully Forest Reserve and a further 135ha in the Nangwarry Native Forest Reserve, for ecological outcomes
- Five 216,000L water tanks installed at key locations in the Mount Crawford, Kuitpo and Second Valley Forests, improving communal access to water and fire emergency response capabilities
- Illegal campfire education and awareness targeted
- Active participant in national and state fire management strategy, policy and initiatives, helping to enhance public safety and playing a key role in fire management on public lands in the Mount Lofty Ranges, Fleurieu Peninsula and Limestone Coast
- Contribution to the Automated Vehicle Location project and improvements to Incident Management Team organisation, as part of the delivery of actions following the independent "Keelty Review" after the 2019-20 SA bushfire season
- Contribution to the rollout of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System, as it applies to pine plantations and commercial forest managers
- Strong cooperation with the Green Triangle Fire Alliance, for cooperative forest fire management across the south-east of South Australia
- Fire recovery continued following the 2019 Cudlee Creek Bushfire

Image: The ForestrySA FireKing fleet.



4. MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE MID NORTH FORESTS

ForestrySA provides unfunded 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 1,000ha which has not been sold or leased is under consideration for disposal and future alternative use. Most of this area is currently covered by a grazing licence which provided some financial return and assisted 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, including through a caretaker agreement with the Bundaleer Forest Community Areas Association (BFCAA)
- Continued support and advice for new event centre, Maple & Pine. The venue was officially launched at Bundaleer Forest Reserve in June 2021, heralding a new beginning for the forest under custodianship of BFCAA.
- For more information about their work, visit www.mybundaleer.com/bundaleer-visitor-event-centre
- Ongoing work to assist Spring Gully Foods with its Manuka honey trial site in Wirrabara Forest
- Facilitate and administer land management agreements for remaining land under ForestrySA management

Image: The Conservator's Hut, Bundaleer Forest.



5. GOVERNANCE

6. 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 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 the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, acting through 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: Horse riders on the Wilampa Trail, Second Valley Forest. Courtesy of the District Council of Yankalilla.



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