



ForestrySA



Government  
of South Australia



Responsible  
Wood  
RW17-214

ForestrySA 2022-23

# COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT

Annual Report



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



## WORKING WITH AND ON COUNTRY IS WHAT WE DO

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, Ramindjeri, Meintangk, Marditjali, Pinejunga 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.

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.

# FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



ForestrySA is appointed to manage State forest reserves for multiple uses. ForestrySA receives community service obligation funding from the South Australian Government each year to deliver services that a similar commercial business would not provide.

Funding for 2022-23 totalled \$3.9 million and was used to deliver a range of services including:

- Recreation and visitor infrastructure and facilities
- Activity and event management
- Shared use and single use trails
- Biodiversity and threatened species conservation programs
- Integrated and landscape pest plant and animal control
- Prescribed burning and planning
- Heritage conservation and cultural heritage
- Friends of the Forest volunteer program
- Fire management and firefighting for community purposes
- Supporting tourism activities
- Community engagement.

ForestrySA's community services program covers approximately 16,500ha of native forest management in the Mount Lofty Ranges, Green Triangle and remaining lands in the Mid North. It also covers community use of the pine plantation forests in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Forests remain an incredibly popular place to visit. Last year over 800,000 people came to the forest, this included 1,900 school students who camped in the forest and nearly 20,000 people that participated in the 342 registered events held in the forests.

ForestrySA remains committed to protecting forest assets, promoting public participation and achieving the greatest benefit from the management of plantation and native forest resources for the people of South Australia.

This report summarises ForestrySA's community service activities conducted throughout 2022-23.

**Tim Ryan**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

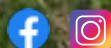
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## ForestrySA Head Office

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT US

ForestrySA manages:

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

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 funding is provided by the South Australian Government.

CSO funding supports:

- Native forest management
- Community use of forest reserves
- Community fire protection.

# 1. NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

*Protecting threatened plants and animals*

Weed control completed across **650ha**

**30,000** volunteers involved in the South East Biodiversity Corridors project since 2003

**16,500ha** of Native Forest Reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast

Protecting **threatened orchids**

**3,300 hours** volunteered and significant recreation, conservation and heritage outcomes achieved

**INTER AGENCY COLLABORATION** for targeted feral animal control

# 1. NATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

ForestrySA managed Native Forest Reserves across 16,500ha in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast in 2022-23.

“ForestrySA continues to be a leader in threatened flora and fauna species protection and cultural heritage conservation.”

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Aboriginal cultural restoration in the Limestone Coast at Rock Shelter Native Forest Reserve in partnership with Burrendies Aboriginal Corporation and the Landscape Boards’ Aboriginal Focus Group.
- Continued expansion of biodiversity values within Native Forest Reserves, following discovery of *Cullen australasica* at Cudlee Creek and Ingalalla Falls, and *Olearia grandiflora* at Mount Gawler and Coralinga.
- Continued involvement with cooperative, multi-agency pest animal control programs, achieving substantial outcomes in the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Limestone Coast.
- Facilitation of volunteer programs, seeing 3,300 volunteer hours and significant recreation, conservation and heritage outcomes delivered.
- Special focus on threatened orchid species restoration, including propagation and planting of seedlings in the wild, and protection of key habitats.
- Landscape-scale fauna monitoring programs, including monitoring of species such as the Square-tailed kite, Swamp wallaby, Bassian thrush and Southern brown bandicoot.
- Planning and scoping for a new Native Forest Management Plan for Mount Crawford Forest.
- Plant database developed to capture historical flora and fauna survey data collected from within the forest estate.



## 2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

*Creating sustainable ways to explore nature*

**830,000**  
forest visitors  
recorded

community  
forest access  
across  
**33,000ha**

**9,000+**  
permits issued  
for forest  
activities

**342**  
forest  
events

**280,000**  
visitors  
to Fox Creek  
Bike Park



## 2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

ForestrySA managed conservation, public access and nature-based recreation across 33,000ha of forest reserves in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast during 2022-23. Our staff also continued to facilitate public recreational access in over 80,000ha of pine plantation areas under lease arrangement in the Green Triangle.

“Forest reserves continued to be a highly valued community asset, with events and recreational activities free to take place following years of restriction due to COVID-19.”

### KEY OUTCOMES

- A total of 833,651 forest visitors recorded across the Mount Lofty Ranges and Limestone Coast during the year
- 1,940 students attended 24 camps in the forest
- 19,668 people attended 342 registered events and group activities, held predominantly in Mount Lofty Ranges forests

### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

ForestrySA continued to identify and upgrade visitor infrastructure to facilitate safe and enjoyable forest visits. In the Limestone Coast, this included installation of new totem signs within Native Forest Reserves.

Mount Lofty Ranges infrastructure initiatives included:

- Redesign of The Avenues picnic area, with installation of signage and new parking bays.
- Repairs to Thomas Hill House, Old School House, Fromms Farm and Cromer Shed.
- Installation of updated signage on the Tinjella Trail in Kuitpo Forest.
- Installation of interchangeable visitor signage at Chookarloo Campground.
- New toilets at Ingalalla Falls in partnership with District Council Yankalilla (pictured below).

A new hike or ride-in campground, Karrawirra-tya-illa, was opened to the public in Kersbrook Forest during the year. The campground provides a stopover for visitors using trails within the national parks, forest and reservoirs northern trails network.



## 2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

### VISITORS AND EVENTS

- 833,651 visitors were recorded in 2022-23, compared with more than 1 million the previous year. With South Australians now free to holiday abroad and interstate after years of restrictions, visitation has fallen slightly overall.
- The number of events and group activities held on ForestrySA land rose significantly during the year, with approximately 19,668 people attending 342 registered events and group activities, predominantly across the Mount Lofty Ranges. Large community events included the Nature Play SA Forest Festival, numerous mountain bike races and the BikeSA Dirty Weekend at Fox Creek Bike Park, motorbike trail rides, the Pines Enduro, the Heysen 105 Ultra Series and ROAR Barossa.
- Limestone Coast after-dark visitor experience Ghost Mushroom Lane was in demand once again during May 2023, however forest management operations and seasonal conditions provided a challenge for the site, causing both a late start and early finish to the season. The site, which previously experienced up to 20,000 visitors over 2 months, saw around 800 people visit in the short time it was able to remain open.
- Forest reserves remain an important location for school outdoor education camps. 1,940 students attending 24 camps throughout the year. Planning has been made simpler for camp organisers thanks to an “information for schools” resource made available via the ForestrySA website, providing maps, frequently asked questions, information and tips.
- More than 9,220 permits were administered for forest activities such as camping, horse riding, fossicking and adventure caving.

### COMMUNITY FORESTRY

- A reinvigorated Koala Food Project was run in Kuitpo Forest for the second consecutive year, with volunteers meeting regularly to maintain and enhance a local eucalyptus plantation which serves as a long-term food supply for koalas at Cleland Wildlife Park.
- Friends of Heysen Trail volunteers worked with staff to maintain and re-direct sections of the Heysen Trail through Second Valley, Kuitpo and Mount Crawford Forests. This popular 1,200km walk passes through numerous forest reserves and this volunteer partnership plays an important role in maintaining the trail and supporting the thousands of forest visitors who use it each year.
- Volunteer trail carers worked tirelessly to build and maintain popular bike trails at Fox Creek Bike Park and other mountain bike trail networks across the Mount Lofty Ranges. Staff supported volunteers to ensure sound work, health and safety practices, and bike trails remain safe, sustainable and of high quality.
- Improving accessibility for all forest users. Initiatives include:
  - Provision of disability access information on the ForestrySA website.
  - Support for the Human Projectiles mountain bike club’s successful grant application for 2 new adaptable mountain bike trails at Fox Creek Bike Park.
  - Development of an Accessible Outdoors Program in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service, SA Water and the Bedford Group, to be piloted in 2023-24.



# 2. COMMUNITY USE OF FOREST RESERVES

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

ForestrySA continued to engage with the community using social media platforms to ensure current information was available and to enhance education and awareness of commercial and community forestry. There was a focus on risk and safety, education and awareness of forest use, commercial forestry, and interesting events and activities.

Website review and updates continued during this period, providing more relevant and useful information for both plantation management and community use. Information to help educate the community regarding safety around harvesting operations and during the annual fire danger season were key priorities.

Media releases and follow-up responses were provided on a number of topics, including announcement of the refurbished FireKing fire appliances, announcement of Fox Creek Bike Park as SA's home of adaptive mountain biking (aMTB), roll-out of the Automated Vehicle Location in fire appliances and Ghost Mushroom Lane.

ForestrySA continued to be active on social media platforms Facebook and Instagram and also joined professional network LinkedIn, where a following is steadily building.



### FACEBOOK

User reach: 101,271  
(Up 34%)



### INSTAGRAM

User reach: 5,689  
(Up 44%)



### WEBSITE

Users: 142,730  
(Up 8%)

ForestrySA also seeks to cross promote initiatives and campaigns from allied community groups and organisations such as the Country Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia, SA Water, Responsible Wood, The Thin Green Line Foundation and many others, to boost education and awareness of forestry, conservation, recreation and public safety.

The ForestrySA website continued to serve as an important resource for forest users, community groups, neighbours, stakeholders and customers, with a range of forest information and answers to frequently asked questions readily available.



# 3. COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM

*Keeping communities and forests safe*

**FIREKING**  
appliances  
refurbished

**20 fires**  
attended by  
ForestrySA fire  
crews

**PRESCRIBED  
BURNING**  
conducted across 370ha in  
the Mount Lofty Ranges  
and Limestone Coast

**TOTAL  
FIRE BAN**  
public education  
ongoing



# 3. COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM

ForestrySA is committed to bushfire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

“ForestrySA’s integrated fire management program helps keep commercial plantations, Native Forest Reserves and local communities safe from the threat of bushfire.”

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Maintenance of a bushfire management program covering all aspects of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Continued close working relationship and positive collaboration with the Country Fire Service, working together to keep communities and assets safe.
- Major refurbishment of ForestrySA’s flagship FireKing appliances, modernising the existing fleet and increasing future response capabilities in forest reserves and surrounding communities.
- 20 fire incidents responded to in the Mount Lofty Ranges.
- ForestrySA’s fire responsibilities in the Limestone Coast region now covered via a Memorandum of Administrative Agreement (MoAA) with the Department for Environment and Water. There were no major incidents of concern in this region during the year.
- One prescribed burn undertaken in Kay Native Forest Reserve in the Limestone Coast by Department for Environment and Water crews, with assistance from OneFortyOne, under the current MoAA.
- Annual firebreak and access track maintenance completed.
- Continued development of the ForestrySA Fire Management Program, with a focus on staff development. As the program continues to evolve, ForestrySA staff are being recognised by other agencies for their skills and expertise in plantation firefighting.
- Acknowledgement of the 40th anniversary of the devastating 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. The devastation of one of Australia’s deadliest bushfire events remains a poignant lesson in resilience, innovation, and forest firefighting for ForestrySA crews, decades after the event.
- Support for the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference held in Adelaide during August 2022.



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