

Annual Report 2013-14

ForestrySA / PIRSA

Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement
for the provision of
Community Service Obligations by ForestrySA

August 2014



FOREWORD

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

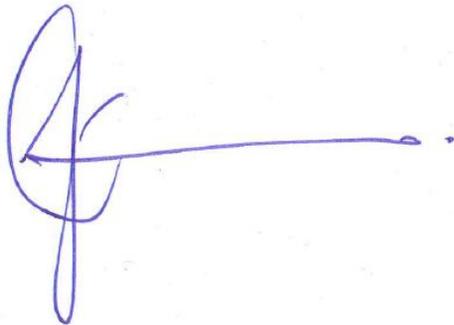
ForestrySA has continued to deliver a range of community service obligation programs and projects across the Green Triangle and Mount Lofty Ranges in 2013-14.

ForestrySA has worked with a number of other agencies and land owners to bring an integrated landscape management approach to environmental issues.

The dedication of ForestrySA staff and their efforts to seek improvements in the operation of the CSO program continues to be noteworthy.

ForestrySA manages about 25,000 ha of native vegetation across its estate, receives recreational use by almost 150,000 visitors, hosts up to 300 events each year and contributes over 25,000 volunteer hours through its community engagement program.

Across all its operations, ForestrySA remains committed to achieving the greatest benefit from the management of plantation and native resources for the people of South Australia. This report summarises ForestrySA's CSOs conducted throughout 2013-14.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Coleman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jerome Coleman
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE
FORESTRYSA

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1. INTRODUCTION

ForestrySA manages:

- the State owned commercial plantations in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Mid North;
- the commercial plantations in the Green Triangle on behalf of OneFortyOne Plantations Pty Ltd (OFO); and
- areas of native vegetation (most of which is gazetted as Native Forest Reserve) within and surrounding the areas of commercial plantation.

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

CSO funding supports:

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

2. GOVERNANCE

ForestrySA operates in accordance with:

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

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

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

The policy seeks to:

- Provide the framework for Sustainable Forest Management practices, processes, systems and review;
- 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; and
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of all persons involved in ForestrySA activities.

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

4. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This annual report provides an overview of the CSO funded programs delivered by ForestrySA and a summary of the activities that have been undertaken by ForestrySA during 2013-14, and fulfils one of the reporting requirements under the MoAA.

5. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

5.1 Native forest management

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

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

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

Activities delivered under this program include:

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

Forest Management Plans have been prepared for the Northern Forests (2008), Mount Burr (2010), Mount Gambier (2011) and Penola (2011) Forest Reserves. A plan for the Mount Lofty Ranges is being prepared and will be released for public comment during August 2014. Forest Management Plans describe the resources and values of each forest reserve and identify appropriate management actions.

5.2 Community use of forest reserves

Forest Reserves provide the setting for a wide range of recreation activities including: walking, nature study, picnicking, camping, cycling, cave diving, horse riding and motor sport events. ForestrySA is committed to 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 by providing educational and information materials and opportunities.

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

A number of high profile events take place on Forest Reserves including the Pines Enduro at Mount Burr, Scouts RallySA at Mount Crawford as well as horse endurance rides.

Services delivered under this program include:

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

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

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

5.3 Forest industry development

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

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

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

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

Research priority areas have been identified using information published by organisations such as:

- The now defunct Research Priorities and Coordination Committee, a sub-committee of the Forest and Forest Products Committee;
- Forest and Wood Products Australia; and
- Individual industry member surveys.

Areas of research conducted under the MoAA include:

- Environmental Impacts;
- Tree Improvement and Genetics;
- Product Improvement and Innovation; and
- Climate Change and Bioenergy.

It is becoming more important to ensure information developed over time under this program is captured in forms which ensure its ready availability into the future. Should resourcing commitments be redefined suddenly the risk of loss of a significant asset would be high. This need has guided the definition of some projects proposed for completion over the next few years.

5.4 Community fire protection

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

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

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

6. ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2013-14

The following is a brief overview of CSO activities delivered during 2013-14.

6.1. Native forest management

Pasture Strip

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

Parts of the Pasture Strip will be replanted with native plants and other areas of degraded wetland will be rehabilitated. In 2013-14, 17 hectares of direct seeding was established and several thousand seedlings were planted by the three schools that have an ongoing involvement in the project. These schools are: Millicent High School, Glenburnie Primary School and Newbery Park Primary School.

Trial mounding was undertaken and successful revegetation using tubestock was achieved.

Annual bird surveys were completed as a part of the ongoing monitoring of the project.

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

Wildlife corridor project

Two new corridors were established in 2013-14: Windy Hill to Mt Watch and Honeysuckle to Dry Creek. Tubestock was planted by a number of school groups and the Department of Correctional Services clients. Direct seeding of these sites will be undertaken in following years.

Bird monitoring was undertaken for the seventh year, including bird banding which was begun in 2011.

6.2 Community use of forest reserves

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

Fleurieu Swamps Rehabilitation Project

Further work has been undertaken on the Fleurieu Swamps Rehabilitation Project located in the Second Valley Forest. This project has been funded by an external grant (\$600,000 over 5 years).

Work undertaken over the last 12 months includes pest plant and animal control and revegetation projects.

Centennial Drive – Indigenous Engagement Project

To meet its commitment to community and indigenous engagement ForestrySA facilitated an opportunity for the local Peramangk and other indigenous people to re-connect to country at a traditional meeting site located at the Centennial Drive Campground on the South Para River. This site was used in October 2013 for women to meet and celebrate the Seven Sisters Dreaming with the Pitjantjatjara custodian of the story. The Seven Sisters is a group of stars Europeans call Pleiades visible in the night sky in both the Southern and Northern Hemispheres but to the Australian Aboriginal people they are part of their dreaming. Positive feedback was provided regarding the event and it is planned to be undertaken again in October 2014.

Improved Visitor Information

Over the last 12 months ForestrySA has developed new information brochures for Ranges Region Reserves. This has included new colour brochures for Kuitpo, Bundaleer and Wirrabara Forests which are available from the ForestrySA website. Work is underway on a draft of the Mt Crawford Forest brochures.

A Signs Standards Manual has been created which will allow for improved standardisation of ForestrySA signage. Using sign specifications from this manual ForestrySA is now working on new information and interpretive signs for Ranges Region Forests. Templates for Kuitpo have been finalised and drafts for the Mt Crawford Forest are being developed.

Creat-N Trax – KTM 3 Forest's Trail Rides

Linked to the South Australian Off-Road Motorcycling Strategy – Priority 3 (a) and building on an already constructive relationship between ForestrySA and Juventus Motorcycling Club to provide to improve access to forest reserves, a new series of motor bike trail rides has been developed.

The event concept was instigated by ForestrySA and involves a series of three low impact rides in different reserves as part of an annual program. The rides have been badged as the KTM 3 Forest's Trail Rides and where held in the Mt Crawford, Wirrabara and Second Valley Forests in 2013 -14. Positive feedback was received from event organisers and participants. An additional benefit to the ride program is that \$10.00 of every entry fee is donated to the South Australian Foodbank who provides food for less privileged people.

Trailblazer Challenge

During October 2013, the annual *Trailblazer Challenge* was held, attracting 1200 participants competing over 18, 34, 50 or 100km distances in a team environment. Commencing at the Adelaide University Sportsgrounds, the course takes competitors through scenic walking trails of the Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty Ranges with participants of the 100km distance finishing at the Kuitpo Forest Information Centre. Designed as a fundraiser, the *Trailblazer Challenge* raised \$186,000 which was shared between the Operation Flinders Foundation, helping transform the lives of young people “at risk” and other charities nominated by the Rotary Club of Adelaide.

ForestrySA has been a proud supporter of the event through numerous name changes since its conception in 1999. The event was originally known as the *Heysen Trailwalker* and from 2014 will be known as the *Operation Flinders Challenge*. The last leg of the 100km race follows the Heysen Trail through Kuitpo Forest Reserve, passing checkpoints located at the Rocky Creek Hut and The Ironbarks Picnic Area, with the finish line located outside the Kuitpo Forest information Centre.

Upgrade of Pines Cave

New infrastructure was installed at Pines Cave the most popular cave diving site in the South East. New changing facilities and interpretive signage was installed for the benefit of divers and the general public. Replanning of the site with native species to improve the aesthetics of the site was also undertaken. Over 600 cave divers went diving in ForestrySA managed caves over the course of the year.

6.3 Forest Industry Development (Research)

Gumeracha trials and demonstration plantings

Ongoing maintenance of the Kersbrook arboretum maintenance has been completed as necessary during the year. A significant number of the individual field trials that collectively contribute to the *South Australian Farm Tree Improvement Project (SAFTIP)* are located at Gumeracha. A program of measurement commenced and was completed during the year with analysis and reporting commencing.

Eucalyptus leucoxylon Seed Source Trial

Ongoing management including herbicide application was completed at Bundaleer, Bennetts and Scrimshaws sites. A proposal to extend this trial series to Victorian provenances using seed available from a reputable industry supplier is being considered.

Bundaleer Species Comparison Trial

Following fire damage to this trial in the previous year this trial was inspected and decisions made to retain it with a thinning/form pruning to take place in the affected parts and then to monitor recovery.



Fire damage in Bundaleer species comparison trial (photo taken May 2013)

MLR Short and Long term Water Monitoring

Water sampling has taken place as required over the whole year with activity concentrated in the winter months around significant wet weather and where stream flow was evident. Reporting to PIRSA and the EPA, as well as internally to FSA has taken place according to agreed schedules.

Forest Health Surveillance and Reporting

Annual Sirex control programs with nematode inoculation of trap trees throughout the Green Triangle and Mount Lofty Ranges and Mid North have been completed as required over the autumn/winter period. Trap-tree plot programs in all locations are ongoing. Benefits from these programs flow to the wider radiata pine plantation industry and farm forestry community through maintenance and improvement of regional forest health.

A small Sirex lure testing project was undertaken in conjunction with other agencies across Australia (SA, Vic, Tas, Qld), initiated via the National Sirex Committee. Traps were checked regularly and lures replaced every four weeks. Final reporting is not yet available.

The Pine aphid (*Essigella*) biocontrol program has reported very good news late in the year - the *Diaeretus* wasp was confirmed as widespread throughout Northeast Victoria (Beechworth, Bright, Myrtleford, Benalla), and is also reproducing in Gippsland. Wasps

have been observed at distances in excess of 30km from the nearest release site. Hence it can be confidently declared that it has established in Australia. Checks for establishment in South Australia have started but no reports of wasp presence have been reported to date.

Australian Plantation Industry Herbicide Research Consortium (APIHRC)

Management (measures, analysis, reporting) of previous year's trials and establishment of 2013 and 2014 herbicide screening trials proceeded on time over the year.

Field Demonstrations

UAV Field Demonstrations took place before a very interested group of staff from various companies from the Green Triangle. Unfortunately on the day increasing wind speeds prevented a full review resulting in the demonstration being rescheduled using two ForestrySA sites. The information collected was processed and returned composite photography in both near infrared (NIR) and RGB formats.



A range of likely services of relevance to forest managers is likely, including:

1. Stem density Mapping
2. Competition Mapping
3. Weed Mapping
4. Auditing Map

Further work is being proposed to establish the cost effectiveness and ability of the services to improve costs and/or management capability.

Visitor Hosting

Bundaleer Pinus halepensis trial access. During the period a visiting fellow at the University of Western Sydney and senior lecturer at the University of Zaragoza (Spain) accessed the 1972 *Pinus halepensis* trial at Bundaleer and took core samples to complement work he has done on the dendrochronology and local adaptation of *Pinus halepensis* for the Mediterranean basin.



John Dillon Fellows

In conjunction with PIRSA, ForestrySA hosted five international scientists from different disciplines visiting the SE region under the John Dillon Memorial Fellowship (ACIAR).

FORESTERRA

ForestrySA hosted a two day visit by a group from this European based project group as part of a broader tour of Mediterranean climate locations around Australia. The aim was to examine the potential for developing international collaboration in research and funding under several themes for forests in Mediterranean environments. Field trips to local pine and bluegum plantations highlighted aspects of local research knowledge and needs.

6.4 Community Fire Protection

Season 2013-14

ForestrySA operates seven fire towers in the Green Triangle region and one in the Mount Lofty Ranges for early fire detection. Due to the dry conditions experienced over the 2013-14 fire season, the towers were operated on 61 days – which is a lower number of days than average.

Across the State ForestrySA fire crews attended 35 fires for the season, including 12 fires on private land or land managed by other agencies.

Fourteen prescribed burns totalling over 700ha were completed during spring and autumn. Prescribed burns reduce the hazard in areas of native forest, help to protect adjoining assets and contribute to biodiversity conservation objectives.

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

ForestrySA continues to participate in the Heads of Agencies for Public Land Fire Management Committee, the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee and regional Bushfire Management Committees.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

Operating statement for the financial year ended 30 June 2014

	COMMUNITY FORESTRY ²	FOREST INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION	2013-14	2012-13
INCOME					
CSO funds	2 244 412	473 775	471 332	3 189 520	3 117 073
EXPENSES					
Salary & wages	1 058 952	322 969	450 029	1 831 949	1 533 921
Plant & equipment	9 460	-	-	9 460	16 028
Materials	55 231	1 520	7 452	64 203	70 678
Contracts & services	541 071	90 229	40 051	671 351	686 846
Vehicles	184 488	20 834	199 889	405 211	366 439
Staff related expenses	15 281	4 489	70 008	89 778	35 081
Information technology	20 115	4 023	-	24 138	27 640
Building & property	30 338	-	-	30 338	47 720
Administration & finance	54 232	6 342	1 137 540	1 198 115	1 212 505
TOTAL EXPENSES	1 969 168	450 407	1 904 969	4 324 544	3 996 808

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

8. KEY STATISTICS

Native Forest Management Program

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Native forest conservation	Total area of Gazetted Native Forest Reserve	Maintained or increased target	15,994 hectares
Assess and extend biodiversity and heritage values	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works plan achieved and reviewed	Yes
Pest plant and animal control	Relevant actions completed from Forest management Plans	>75% of scheduled actions complete	Yes
	Works plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works reviewed	Yes
Provision of natural history information to the public	Public Events	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urrbrae TAFE – Meadows Flats Environmental Assessment 2. Three Schools participated in environmental and plantation career talk. 3. UniSA – Flora Survey 4. Interpretive walking trials 5. Butterfly identification field day undertaken at Donnybristle site.
	Native Forest Reserve resource documents available online	All completed documents available	Yes
Collaboration for landscape scale outcomes	Representation on peak groups	16 Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Recovery Team 2. Threatened Plant Recovery Team 3. Green Triangle Regional Plantations Committee -Natural Resources Management Sub-committee 4. Living Flinders Planning Committee 5. Mount Lofty Ranges Fire, South East and Southern Flinders Cooperative 6. Mount Lofty Ranges Fleurieu Swamps and Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
			Recovery Program 7. Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery Program 8. South Lofty Block Threatened Orchid Recovery Program 9. South Para Natural Resources Management Committee 10. Mount Bold / Scott Creek Biodiversity Hotspots Group 11. Sixth Creek Catchment Group 12. Mount Compass Oak-bush and Marsh Gum Recovery Team 13. SA Trail Coordination Committee 14. Walking SA 15. Bicycle SA 16. South East Fire Cooperative
Prescribed burning for ecological purposes	Areas planned, scheduled and burnt	>75% burns achieved (within prescription) over 3 years	No ecological burning was planned or completed

Community Use of Forest Reserves Program

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Provision of a range of permitted non-commercial activities	Number of permits by category Website shows activities available	No specific target set for this period Website up to date	Camping permits – 2,359 Horse riding – 409permits Cave diving – 276 permits Firewood – 148 loads Total number of events – 241 Yes
Public usage	Visitor numbers recorded	>200 000	144,876 – down on previous year.
Opportunities for community engagement	Stakeholder consultation for CSO related activities	Stakeholder feedback received	Yes – survey sent to stakeholders
Diversity of community groups involved	Number of different community groups engaged	>25	32
Rangers available for compliance, facilitation, education, support	Rangers employed Ranger contacts	7 FTE >previous year	7 FTE Yes
A system of monitoring use in compliance with forestry regulations	Number of compliance incidents	No specific target set for this period	37
Volunteer hours attributed to Community Engagement Program	Hours	>20 000	20,432 increase on previous year.
Comments from the community with regard to community use	Media coverage	No specific target set for this period	Media coverage of many events held on ForestrySA land throughout the year.
Projects to address visitor management	Works Plan achieves CSO outcomes	Works Plan achieved and reviewed	Yes

Forest Industry Development

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Projects to improve forest productivity and sustainable forest management sourced from defined Areas of Interest	Project proposal justification points directly to area of Interest	100% new projects	Yes
Agreed information and communication services provided (factsheets, articles, field days)	Project communications	100% of proposed factsheets etc. and 2 field days per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Days – 2 • Re-vegetation methods (types of guarding), species propagation, species selection and grazing pressure control issues. • FORESTERRA field day • Wild Flower leaflet produced. New colour brochures
Forestry demonstration and gene conservation areas are managed consistent with management plans developed by PIRSA	Agreed annual works programs (Gumeracha, Wandilo, Bundaleer)	90% target dates met	Yes

Community Fire Protection Program

ITEM	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ANNUAL TARGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Contribution to state wide or landscape scale fire protection initiatives	Attendance at State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) and Bushfire Management Committee (BMC) meetings and related meetings	80% attendance	Achieved
Contribution to regional fire suppression	Fires attended by ForestrySA on lands other than Forest Reserves	Number of fires	35
Prescribed burning undertaken for fuel reduction	Areas planned scheduled and burnt	>75% of scheduled burns achieved as a three year average	14 burns, 700ha burnt
Comments from the community with regard to fire management (whether positive, negative or neutral)	Media coverage	No specific target set for this period	Both positive and negative comments were included in media coverage of bushfire response and prescribed burning