

CREATING RESILIENT LANDSCAPES IN THE BAROSSA
RESTORING NATIVE VEGETATION
FROM KAISERSTUHL TO THE NORTH PARA RIVER



Government of South Australia
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Natural Resources Management Board



1.0 PURPOSE

The BGWA has developed a pilot program in partnership with Natural Resources, Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges. The program aims to engage BGWA members to the west of Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park in the North Para tributaries of Jacobs Creek and Tanunda Creek (Bethany, Krondorf and Rowland Flat areas) to restore 'stepping stones' of native vegetation to the North Para River.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The BGWA has been successfully engaging members in a program known as "Creating Resilient Landscapes in the Barossa", with bus tours to demonstrate and encourage the use of native plants on vineyard properties.

Driving this initiative is the BGWA's desire to encourage landholders within its grape grower database to take a more environmentally-focussed attitude to their vineyard management. The BGWA has communicated the benefits of establishing native grasses and revegetating landholdings in terms of preparing for a changing climate, saving water, improving soil health, preventing erosion, improving biodiversity, and beautifying their properties.

The case for increasing biodiversity in the Barossa's vineyards – and in turn 'creating more resilience' in the face of a changing climate - has been escalated by the release of RDA's Barossa Region Climate Change Adaptation Plan (draft Aug 2014), which states:

- by 2030 temperatures in the region will rise by 0.6 - 1.0deg C (and by 1.5 - 2deg C by 2070),
- frequency and intensity of heatwaves will increase,
- annual rainfall will decline by 2 to 5% by 2030 (and by 10 to 20% by 2070) and,
- landscape fragmentation, and regional native fauna and flora are the most vulnerable environmental issues.

It would be a significant achievement for the region if the Barossa's 550-strong grape growing community (the region's largest agricultural industry) 'stepped up' to take a leadership role in creating more 'stepping stones' of biodiversity to reduce landscape fragmentation*.

1.11 There has been some uptake of native grasses and the planting of shrubs and trees in several locations in the Barossa, but there is yet no widespread uptake at 'landscape scale'.

1.12 Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park, a 403 ha bush reserve in the centre of the Barossa is the most significant remaining native vegetation in the region**. It is surrounded by private bush reserve and agricultural properties, including grazing land and BGWA member properties.

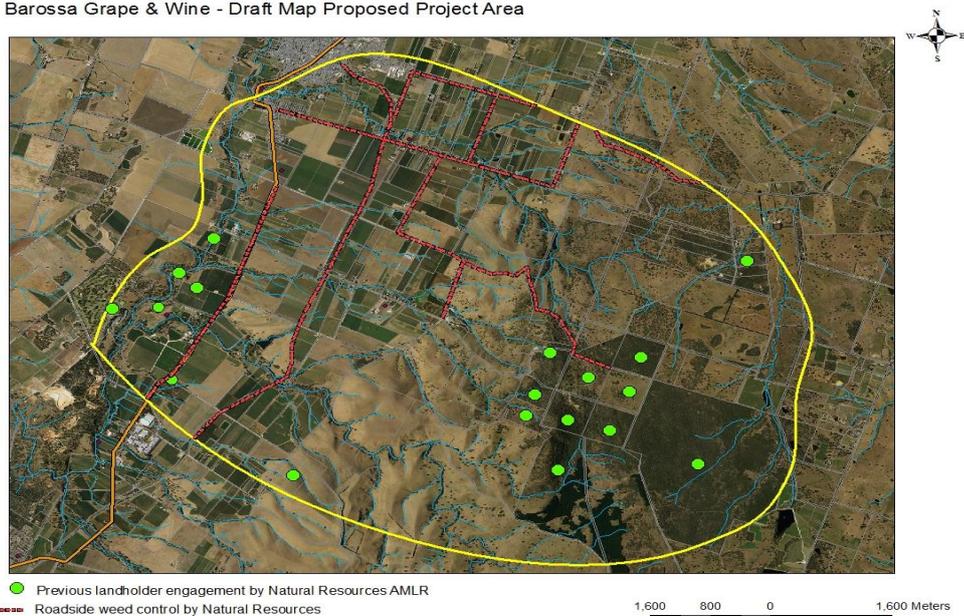
This presents an opportunity to increase the overall mass of native vegetation in the region, with 'fingers' or 'stepping stones' of restored native vegetation from Kaiserstuhl through BGWA members' properties along the tributaries of Jacobs Creek and Tanunda Creek to restore 'stepping stones' of native vegetation to the North Para River.

*In the Hundred of Barossa, 13% of remaining vegetation is formally protected; 87% on private lands.

**Kaiserstuhl contains significant stands of rare vegetation. It provides habitat for at least five bird species considered threatened at State level, and up to 400 native plant species including seven species of State conservation significance. A major threat is olives which are capable of forming dense groves, eliminating all understory and dramatically altering the quality of habitat for native species. The North Para Catchment provides habitat for about 45 species identified by Birds for Biodiversity as declining (towards extinction).

- 1.13 There exists an over-arching set of plans for the protection and enhancement of native vegetation in the region including:
- Naturelink – Cape Borda to Barossa;
 - Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board’s “Natural Resource Management Plan” and,
 - Internal Natural Resource Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges plans for the ‘Kaiser Stuhl Precinct’.
- 1.14 Significant efforts to conserve and enhance native vegetation in this area have already occurred including:
- The AMRL NRM Board’s work at Centenary Hill under the federally-funded Biodiversity Project also known as “Creating Resilient Landscapes” (Andrew West);
 - Major restoration work by Pernod Ricard Winemakers in the Jacob’s Creek catchment, and St Hallett Wines adjacent to the North Para;
 - Previous work conducted by the AMLR NRM Board as shown on the map below; and,
 - Work previously undertaken, that may not be on the AMRL NRM Board’s database, for example restoration work undertaken by Chris Hall and others on Rifle Range Road.

Barossa Grape & Wine - Draft Map Proposed Project Area



- 1.15 Many landholders in the catchment described above have been identified as potentially willing participants in the project.

2.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

There are several strategic objectives from existing regional plans that this program will fulfil:

2.1 NRM Plan Program / Sub Program:

L3 - Support land managers to protect and improve the condition of existing ecosystems in the Northern Hills subregion (particularly the Para Wirra, Warren-Hale and Kaiserstuhl).

L4 - Support land managers to restore and reinstate grassy ecosystems in the Northern Hills.

L5 - Support land managers to protect, improve the condition and increase the extent of riparian zones in the Northern Hills.

K5 - Undertake targeted stakeholder engagement to facilitate NRM capacity building and participation in NRM decision-making.

K7 - Promote improved land management practices through education and training opportunities.

3.0 ACTION

The BGWA has gained financial support, in the form of an NRM Sustainable Industry Grant, to facilitate this project in the form of workshops, property visits, and one-on-one consultation. The following approach is being implemented:

Consultation: Engage one-on-one with BGWA members who are in the catchment areas, and liaise with stakeholders such as the Agricultural Bureaux, Pernod Ricard Winemakers, Barossa Council/Bushgardens, BIGG, NRM's Andrew West, Friends of Kaiserstuhl and Mary Retallack prior to formal contact being made seeking their input and support.

Set up: Formalise a steering committee consisting of BGWA staff, several representative landholders identified in Step 1, and AMLR NRM staff;

Benchmarking: Complete an electronic and face-to-face survey (commenced in 2012) to establish a baseline of current, local environmental initiatives including who has undertaken work, how many Ha, and current practice.

Workshops: BGWA hold a series of workshops/walk and talk sessions with interested members featuring Chris Madigan, Tony Fox and David Hughes of AMLR NRM, outlining the benefits to the environment, the community, the Barossa brand – and to improving NRM biodiversity and sustainable land management practices.

On-ground works: Once engaged, AMLR staff will work with members via one-on-one property visits to provide a simplified property plan and then a work plan with supporting funding for weed control, fencing, re-vegetation, protection of existing vegetation, provision of watering points for stock, etc.

Communication: BGWA will communicate progress and results via the media, websites, videos and printed material – and promote the concept with a view to extending the Pilot to other regions of the Barossa.