

Strategic Plan 2026-2029

GOYDER INSTITUTE FOR WATER RESEARCH

The Goyder Institute for Water Research is a collaborative partnership of the South Australian Government through the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), Adelaide University, CSIRO, and Flinders University.

The Institute facilitates collaboration among governments, industry, communities, First Nations, and researchers to identify, develop, and adopt sustainable, innovative, and integrated solutions to complex water management challenges.

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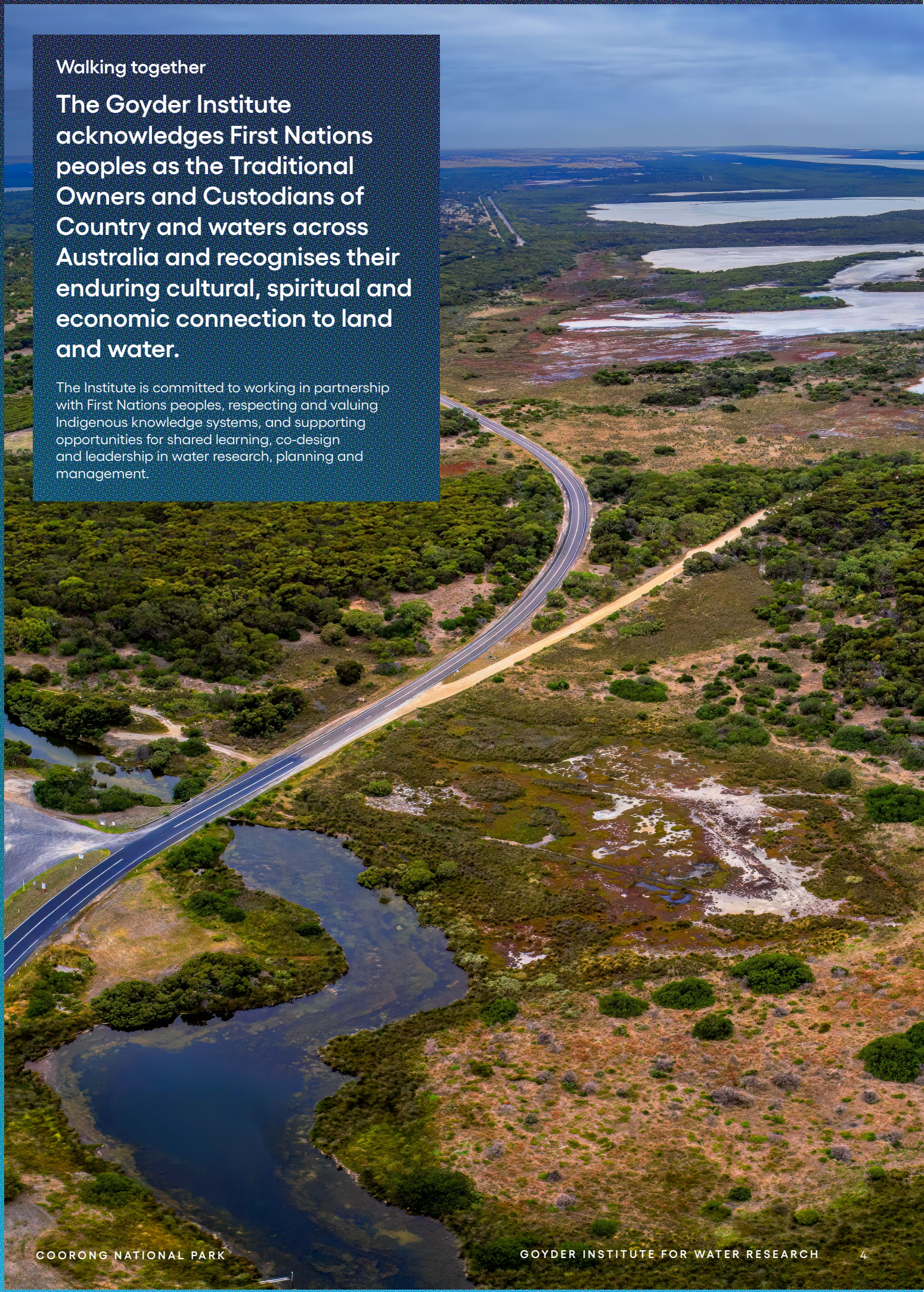


COVER: KATI THANDA-LAKE EYRE
THIS PAGE: WUDINNA, EYRE PENINSULA

Walking together

The Goyder Institute acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and waters across Australia and recognises their enduring cultural, spiritual and economic connection to land and water.

The Institute is committed to working in partnership with First Nations peoples, respecting and valuing Indigenous knowledge systems, and supporting opportunities for shared learning, co-design and leadership in water research, planning and management.



COORONG NATIONAL PARK



Building on a strong foundation

A trusted partner in water research and science

Since 2010, the Goyder Institute for Water Research has been a trusted leader in collaborative water research, connecting government, industry, communities, First Nations peoples and researchers to address significant water challenges. Through a demand-driven, collaborative model, the Institute strengthens evidence-based decision-making and delivers practical solutions.



Evolving to meet today's needs and tomorrow's challenges

Society faces an increasingly complex and rapidly changing landscape. Climate change, population growth, economic shifts, and rising expectations for community and First Nations involvement are transforming how water issues are understood and tackled.

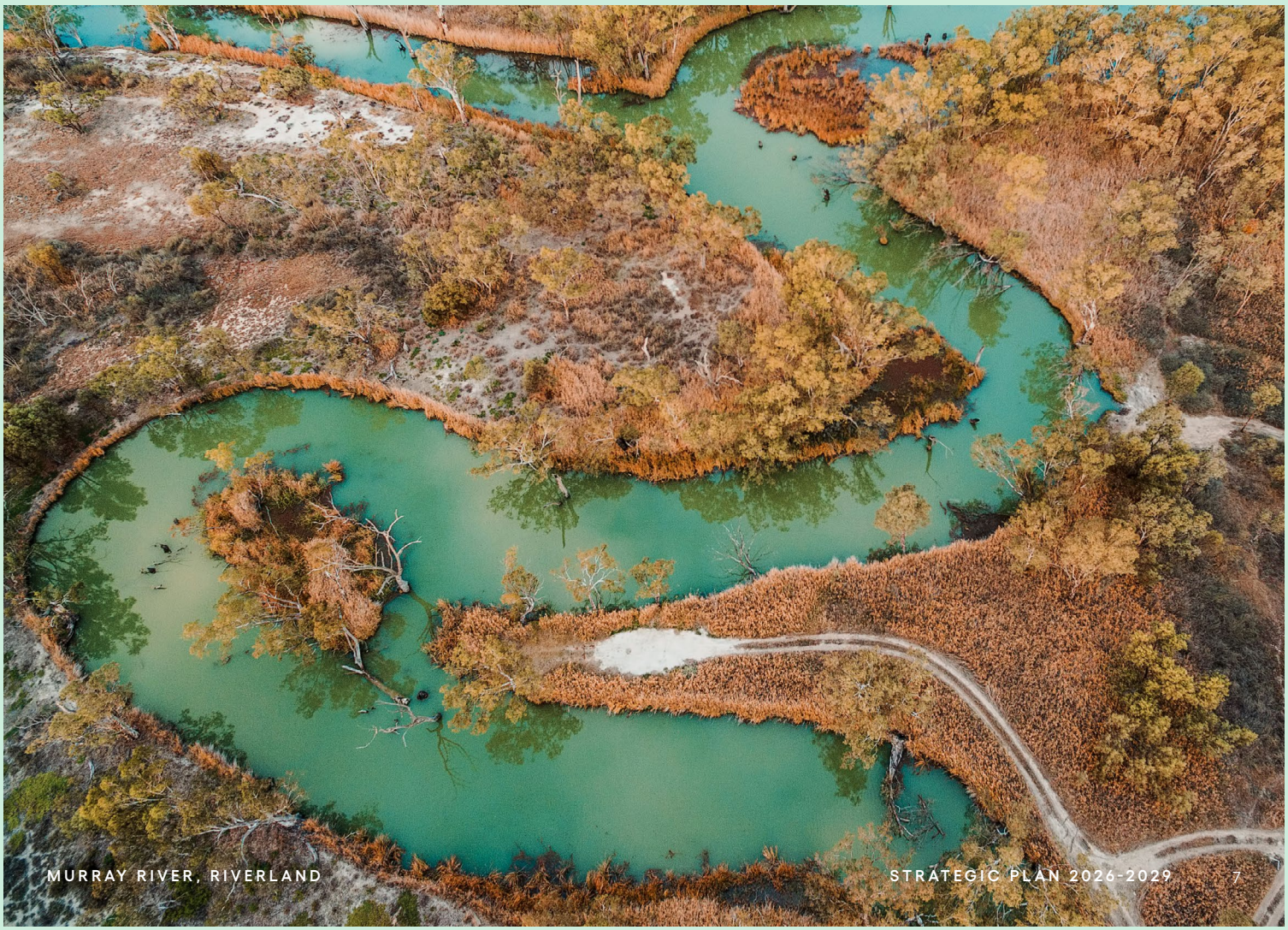
Applied science, collaboration and implementation are becoming increasingly important, with success measured not only by knowledge generation but by real-world impact.

Place-based science and knowledge

The Institute tackles a wide range of water issues, including urban and environmental water, climate resilience, groundwater, industry, and regional development, with an increasing focus on integrated systems thinking and long-term adaptation.

Recent years have seen the growth of place-based science and knowledge partnerships, embedding capacity within regions and strengthening collaboration with communities and First Nations partners. The Coorong, Lower Lakes, and Murray Mouth Research Centre in Goolwa exemplifies a locally led, regionally embedded model for science in South Australia.

This Strategic Plan positions the Institute to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities while strengthening its role as a trusted bridge between science, policy and practice.



MURRAY RIVER, RIVERLAND

Our vision, purpose and operating principles

Vision

The Institute will enhance the vibrancy of communities in South Australia and Australia by being a leader of impactful, collaborative research for sustainable, innovative and integrated water management.

What the Institute does

CREATE IMPACT

Delivering demand-driven research that drives change to ensure the long-term sustainability of water resources.

COLLABORATION

Forming interdisciplinary, multi-organisational and collaborative projects and teams.

CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

Building the capability and capacity of our partners and collaborators.

INNOVATE

Developing innovative tools, solutions and knowledge to address challenges and benefit people, industry and the environment that depend on our water resources.

COMMUNICATE

Sharing our knowledge and learning with end-users and the community to enable informed decision-making.

How the Institute works

EXCELLENCE

Delivering high-quality and quality-assured research and research outputs.

DELIVERY

Ensuring timely, cost-effective project delivery.

RESPECT, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

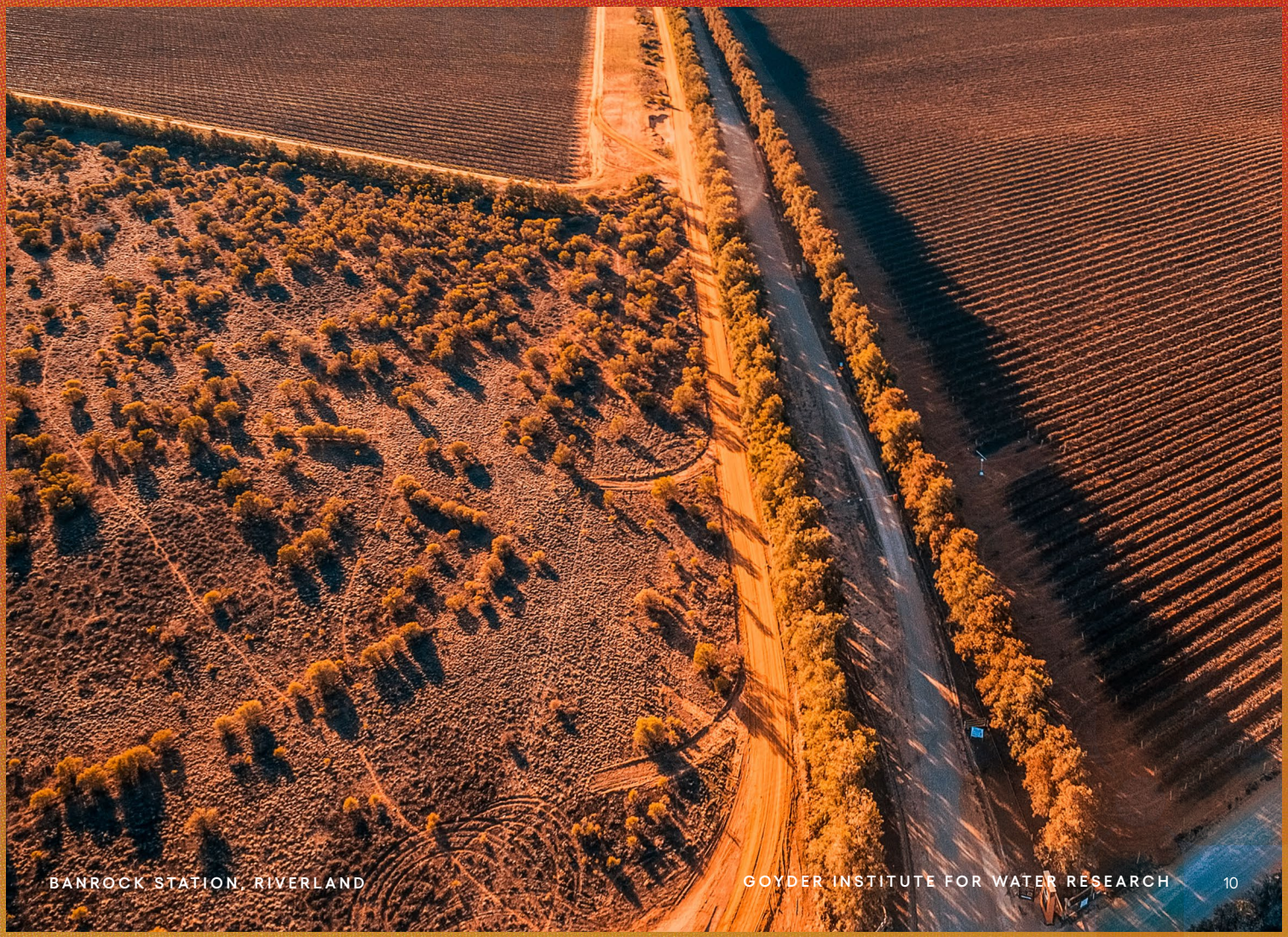
Building positive, respectful and inclusive relationships and shared learning with our partners and collaborators, including communities and First Nations.



COORONG NATIONAL PARK

Strategic goals

Three goals to focus efforts, guide action and ensure a high-performing organisation.



BANROCK STATION, RIVERLAND

1

ENHANCE DEMAND-DRIVEN AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

The Institute's value lies not only in generating science but also in translating knowledge into practical solutions, tools, methods, and decisions that inform policy, shape decision-making, and deliver benefits for communities, industry, and the environment.

The Institute will:

- Strengthen pathways for research adoption and implementation.
- Develop practical tools and decision-support products for end-users.
- Communicate research clearly to support uptake and shared learning.
- Measure and demonstrate research impact and success.

2

STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration is fundamental to the Institute's success and remains one of its key points of difference. The Institute's ability to connect researchers, governments, industry, communities and First Nations organisations is a core strength.

The Institute will:

- Strengthen the collaborative model that underpins its success.
- Expand strategic relationships nationally while maintaining a strong South Australian focus.
- Support multidisciplinary and co-designed research.

3

BUILD CAPABILITY AND IMPACT

To maximise impact, the Institute must continue to develop capacity with partners and establish itself as a trusted, independent, and nationally recognised leader in water research that can adapt to a changing water research and policy landscape.

The Institute will:

- Build capability across partners, end users and researchers.
- Grow its reputation as a trusted, independent and nationally recognised leader in collaborative water research.
- Communicate the impact and value of its research.
- Maintain strong strategic partnerships that support long-term sustainability.
- Remain responsive to emerging water challenges and opportunities.
- Maintain strong governance, project delivery and organisational performance.

Strategic priorities

The Institute will focus its efforts on areas where collaborative research can deliver the greatest benefit to communities, industry, the environment, and decision-makers.

- Climate response
- Water security and integrated water management
- Partner with First Nations
- Food, energy and resources



ANTECHAMBER BAY, KANGAROO ISLAND

Climate response

Climate change is increasing pressure on water resources, ecosystems, industries, and communities through more frequent and severe droughts, floods, and heatwaves, as well as changing water availability and sea levels. While scientific understanding continues to improve, there remains a significant gap between knowledge generation and practical responses, particularly integrated responses that consider water, ecosystems, communities, infrastructure and industry together.

The Institute will:

- Support the sustainable management of water-dependent ecosystems.
- Support water-dependent industries to respond to climate challenges.
- Apply lessons and innovations from other jurisdictions.
- Build capability to manage climate risks and uncertainty that translates into practical implementation and policy outcomes.

Water security and integrated water management

Water supports South Australia's environmental, social, and economic future. Population growth, urban and regional development, climate change, evolving industries, and competing demands are putting more pressure on water systems and infrastructure. Governments, industries, and communities need better tools, knowledge, and approaches to ensure long-term water security and promote integrated water management. This also includes support for development in regional areas.

The Institute will:

- Improve understanding of water security challenges and opportunities.
- Develop integrated and systems-based approaches to water management.
- Support long-term scenario planning, decision-making and adaptive management approaches.
- Advance innovative approaches to integrated water management, water allocation, water efficiency and sustainable supply solutions.
- Develop tools, digital platforms and monitoring approaches that support evidence-based decision-making.
- Learn from national and international experience.
- Build the capability and capacity of partners and end users to plan for uncertain futures.

Partner with First Nations

First Nations peoples hold deep cultural knowledge and enduring connections to water that are essential to sustainable water futures. The Institute is committed to working in genuine partnership with First Nations peoples to embed Indigenous knowledge, support leadership and co-develop research that delivers shared benefit.

The Institute will:

- Support strengthening First Nations leadership and participation in water research, planning and decision-making.
- Work with partners to translate lessons and approaches across jurisdictions where appropriate.
- Co-develop research, governance and priorities with First Nations partners.
- Deepen partnerships with First Nations organisations and communities.
- Strengthen First Nations leadership in water research, planning and decision-making.

Food, energy and resources

South Australia's future prosperity depends on sustainable water management that supports our current and emerging industries, the communities that rely on them, and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The Institute will:

- Deliver research that supports priority water-dependent industries such as energy, resources and agriculture.
- Support industries, communities and governments to respond to emerging challenges associated with energy transition, green industries and sustainable growth.
- Develop knowledge and tools to help allocate and manage water sustainably for communities, industry, and the environment.
- Develop collaborative and multidisciplinary research programs that integrate environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes.
- Support sustainable communities and industries through place-based and community-informed research approaches.

Delivering and monitoring our progress

Implementation will be supported through annual business planning, clear performance measures and oversight by the Institute's Management Board and Research Advisory Committee.

Delivery will be supported through ongoing engagement with researchers, partners and end users.

Progress will be reviewed regularly to ensure the Institute remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.



GOOLWA, FLEURIEU PENINSULA

GOYDER INSTITUTE FOR WATER RESEARCH

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

SARDI
South Australian Research and Development Institute

Adelaide University

CSIRO

Flinders University