

Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 20

13 December 2022



The 20th meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 13 December 2022 at Coorong District Council, Taillem Bend.

The meeting opened with a summary from DEW on the current [flood event](#) at the River Murray in South Australia. The latest River Murray [flow update](#) indicates the peak flow of floodwater is due in Renmark around the end of December, and will be between 190 and 220 GL/day. DEW continues to work closely to support police, SES, local government, government agencies and other stakeholders as required and/or requested on the [River Murray flood response](#).

The Partnership discussed the current flood situation and the impacts to local communities and businesses in the Coorong, Lower Lakes, and Murray Mouth region. Spirit of the Coorong Operator Joel Birch recently met with the SA Tourism Commission (SATC) to discuss impacts to tourism in the region. SATC is developing a marketing campaign to promote positive messages for the region. The Partnership discussed some of the positive environmental outcomes associated with the flood event, such as the abundance of birdlife at the Coorong, and the natural opening of Murray Mouth.

The [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin](#) (HCHB) Program provided a program update. The Business Case for HCHB Phase 2 is currently undergoing consideration and due diligence with the Commonwealth. Approvals mapping is currently underway to determine what approvals may be required for future infrastructure, with early data collection being undertaken to facilitate potential future approvals. The Acting Program Leader reiterated the Community's expectation of a strong social licence and thorough impact assessment and approvals process, should potential infrastructure be proposed. HCHB continues to work closely with the Commonwealth and the DEW Steering Committee as work under HCHB Phase 1B continues. The HCHB Program recently presented some of the key findings and achievements of Phase 1 to key Commonwealth staff, and reaffirmed the importance of continued support for the Coorong.

It was noted that the Basin Plan is meant to be fully implemented by 2024 and by that time South Australia would have delivered all of its commitments at this date.

The HCHB Science team provided an update on two documents currently being prepared, the Coorong Restoration Roadmap, and the Trials and Investigations (T&I) Key Findings document. Public consultation on the Restoration Roadmap will commence in early 2023. The T&I Key Findings document is expected to be released for public consultation in 2023, following internal reviews.

The partnership were supportive of the pending public release of these documents and emphasised the community's interest and expectations in HCHB communicating what the program has delivered under the initial HCHB investment to date. The Partnership suggested that community engagement events communicating the program's achievements would be beneficial. HCHB stated that engagement events are being planned for early 2023. The Partnership requested to be kept informed of the environmental impacts of the floods on the Coorong, at the February Partnership meeting.

The HCHB Program provided an update on the [On-Ground-Works project](#). The project team is currently planning procurement for works at Teringie Wetland to install regulating structures. Survey works are being planned for Tolderol Game Reserve in early 2023.

The Partnership discussed recent visits to the region by the Minister for the Environment and Water the Hon Tanya Plibersek, and Chief Executive of the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Andrew McConville. Partnership Chair Dean Brown and member Geoff Gallasch participated in a round table event with the Minister, which was well received.

[Alexandrina Council](#) provided an update on the Sugars Beach – Murray Mouth Icon Project. Consultation on this project closed in September 2022. In early 2022, Council secured \$1M from the State Government, subject to Federal Government funding, which was not received. Following recent local government elections, it is likely the project will be taken out of council's budget this year and put into next year's, allowing for briefing the new council members and more design work and approvals to occur. There is public support for toilet facilities at this location, and interpretive signage is being planned.

The Chair thanked the outgoing HCHB Acting Program Leader, Glenn Shimmin, for his oversight and positive contribution to the Partnership.

Further Information

The next meeting of the Partnership is scheduled for 2 February 2023 at Coorong District Council, Taillem Bend.

For further Information or to receive regular updates about [Project Coorong](#) please email: projectcoorong@sa.gov.au.