

# Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 22

6 April 2023



The 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 6 April 2023 at Coorong District Council, Tailem Bend.

Interim Director for the Goyder Institute for Water Research (Goyder Institute), Dr Alec Rolston provided the Partnership with an update on the new \$8 million [water research hub](#) to support the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) region, as announced by the [Minister for the Environment and Water](#), Hon Tanya Plibersek MP in October last year. Dr Rolston shared the Goyder Institute's vision for the hub, which will focus on collaboration between First Nations, the community, governments, and researchers, to provide the evidence base, capacity building, and capability for the identification of future management actions to support the CLLMM regions' biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The Goyder Institute continues to work with key stakeholders, including funding partner the Australian Government, on the hub's establishment and governance structure. It is anticipated that the research hub will commence at the beginning of the 2023-24 financial year. The Partnership noted the importance of the research hub working closely with local stakeholders, including local government, First Nations, local businesses, and industry.

The Partnership was provided with a presentation from Associate Professor Luke Mosley from the University of Adelaide on the latest water quality monitoring program in the Coorong. The 2022-23 flood in the Murray-Darling Basin provides a rare opportunity to assess the effects of a large flood on Coorong water quality, with monitoring focussed on the impact to nutrients and salinity levels. Overall, an analysis of the 2022-23 flood has shown a positive effect on water quality, in particular the South Lagoon, however there were some observed increases in nutrient and chlorophyll levels in the low salinity regions of the North Lagoon.

Assoc. Professor Mosley noted that floods lead to improved system flushing which is beneficial in lowering nutrients, organic matter and salinity, and that more frequent medium and large floods on the River Murray likely served this purpose historically. It was noted that it is important to continue to assess the effects of this flood over time, as enhanced biological processes and functions (e.g. macroinvertebrate bioturbation) may further improve water quality. Whilst the benefits of improved water quality are encouraging for the Coorong, without regular and sustained flows these benefits may be short-lived.

A long-term analysis of Coorong water quality (pre-flood) was published in 2023 and is available [here](#).

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) provided an update on the *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* (HCHB) Program. DEW recently provided additional information to the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) as part of the HCHB Phase 2 Business Case review process and is awaiting further advice on the commencement of Phase 2.

DEW continues to progress several key documents relating to the management of the Coorong Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland Ramsar site, including an updated Ecological Character Description and updated Ramsar Management Plan.

The HCHB On Ground Works project team continues to prioritise the delivery of Teringie and Tolderol wetland improvements. Procurement for Teringie wetland works is continuing, with construction aiming to begin in Spring 2023. A survey is currently being conducted at Tolderol wetland encompassing the wetland channels. A due diligence assessment for Lake Hawdon North is currently being assessed by DCCEEW.

HCHB will host a Community Science Forum on 16 May in Goolwa to communicate the latest science from the HCHB program as well as a facilitated consultation on the Coorong Restoration Roadmap. DEW continues to plan for this event with details for registration to be released imminently. Additional consultation events for the Restoration Roadmap are also currently being planned. The Partnership noted its support for hosting consultation events in the region for key HCHB documents and Program milestones.

The Chair, the Hon Dean Brown AO, thanked the Partnership and presenters for their participation and attendance at the meeting.

## Further Information

The next meeting of the Partnership is scheduled for 1 June 2023 at Coorong District Council, Tailem Bend.

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