



On 23 February 2026, the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Community Advisory Panel (CAP) and Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) met on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe at the CLLMM Research Centre in Goolwa.

The meeting brought together more than 30 representatives from community, research and government organisations to discuss Murray-Darling Basin water policy, water management and current research in the region. Key topics included CLLMM water resource and environmental water updates, the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper, ecological observations and monitoring updates.

### CLLMM water resource and environmental water

The Department for Environment and Water's (DEW) Environmental Water and Water Delivery teams provided an update on delivery of water for the environment. Current conditions within the Lower Lakes were discussed, including receding water levels and high evaporative losses, which have resulted in limited opportunities to release freshwater into the Coorong. At the time of the meeting, only fishways and a modified bay at Boundary Creek were open.

CAP members expressed concern regarding no direct water delivery to target black bream breeding over summer. It was suggested that freshwater be released from Goolwa barrage in late summer and early autumn to generate salt wedge conditions for black bream recruitment. This action was implemented a few days later.

Another concern was Coorong North Lagoon average salinity levels, which surpassed the threshold of 45 parts per thousand for the first time in five and a half years.

### Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper

Scott Ashby, Executive Director Basin Science and Knowledge, Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), presented on the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper and the MDBA's public consultation process.

Key issues discussed included current Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) and if they are sufficiently meeting environmental outcomes, and the CLLMM and SA Murray regions assessment as 'poor to moderate' in condition. It was suggested to the group that a volumetric response (e.g. changing SDLs) is not necessarily the solution and that complementary management activities may provide benefits.

Preparedness under climate change and operating with ageing infrastructure across the Basin was discussed, as well as investment into forward-thinking future science programs.

The Basin Plan Review's timeline was shared, and CAP and SAG members were encouraged to make submissions. The final report will to be provided to the Commonwealth Minister, who is responsible for deciding which recommendations are adopted.

The 2026 Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper and supporting documents are available at: [Discussion Paper | Murray-Darling Basin Authority](#)

## DEW's approach

The DEW Murray-Darling Basin and Intergovernmental team are leading the development of a Government of South Australia submission on the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper.

Feedback was sought from CAP and SAG members via round-table discussions about what has, and has not, worked well under the current Basin Plan. Members from the CAP and SAG raised issues of importance, including the new listing of the SA River Murray as a Critically Endangered ecological community, lack of reference to cultural water in the discussion paper, the need to be clear on what the total budget is for infrastructure and water recovery, the need for flexibility in dealing with climate change, what the target volume is for environmental water recovery, the need for clear water quality targets and the importance of long-term data collection.

## Science in the CLLMM

Researchers from SARDI, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Adelaide University, Flinders University, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board and the CLLMM Research Centre shared insights into some of the latest scientific research and monitoring being conducted in and around the CLLMM region, including:

- Morella and Salt Creek fishway monitoring (Qifeng Ye, SARDI)
- barrage fishway monitoring and assessments (Chris Bice, SARDI)
- *Reconnecting The Waters* project (Brenton Zampatti, CSIRO)
- macroinvertebrate and mudflat monitoring (Sabine Dittmann, Flinders University)
- Thukabi (Murray short-necked turtle) monitoring with Ngarrindjeri (Scottie Wedderburn, Adelaide University and Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation)
- water delivery supporting Yarra pygmy perch release sites.
- Thousands of waterbirds, predominantly swan and duck species, response to improved water quality and the emergence of both aquatic vegetation and charophyte species at Teringie Wetland Complex (Sam Hardy, MLRLB)
- Approximately 10,000 birds were observed across Tolderol Game Reserve, including 3,000 migratory waders and 4,000 terns (Sam Hardy, MLRLB).

## CLLMM Research Centre

Updates on CLLMM Research Centre workshops and events can be found at: [What's On | CLLMM Research Centre](#).

## Next Meeting

The CAP will reconvene in April 2026 for a joint meeting with the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG).

### About the CLLMM CAP

Since 2006, a community advisory panel has been meeting regularly to provide guidance on water resource management and projects in the CLLMM region. The panel's collective experience, alongside scientific expertise and First Nations' knowledge, plays a vital role in guiding water management and helping restore the health of the Coorong.

**Learn more** [environment.sa.gov.au/CLLMM-CAP-SAG](https://environment.sa.gov.au/CLLMM-CAP-SAG)

**Contact** [dew.ewater@sa.gov.au](mailto:dew.ewater@sa.gov.au)