

PROJECT COORONG

Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin



Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Update

Welcome to the February 2022 edition of the [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin](#) (HCHB) Update. In this edition we highlight two important opportunities for you to have your say on the development of a Coorong Visitor Experience Plan, as well as the [Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Project's Draft Feasibility Assessment Report](#). We take a closer look at the Scientific [Trials and Investigations](#) Project's climate adaption component, and receive an update from the [First Nations Partnerships](#) Team.

If you would like more information on the HCHB Program or have questions on anything contained in this update, please contact the program team at projectcoorong@sa.gov.au.

The Coorong, connected waters and surrounding lands have sustained many unique First Nations cultures and economies since time immemorial. The Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin program acknowledges the range of First Nations rights, interests and obligations for the Coorong and connected waterways and the cultural connections that exist between Ngarrindjeri and First Nations of the South East peoples across the region and seeks to support their equitable engagement.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following document may contain images and names of people who have died.



Have your say: Coorong Visitor Experience Plan

Share your ideas and help us shape future visitor experiences in the Coorong region.

A visitor experience plan is being developed to create a vision for sustainable nature-based tourism attractions in the Coorong region.

The plan covers the land within and adjacent to the Coorong National Park as well as townships such as Kingston, Salt Creek, Meningie, Goolwa, and Raukkan.

To share your ideas, complete the online survey HERE: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pt96r>

Your contributions will help expand the visitor experience in the Coorong, creating opportunities for new memories, adventures and connections.

*Project delivered by the Department for Environment and Water, Alexandrina Council, Coorong District Council, Kingston District Council, Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation and First Nations of the South East.



Have your say: Coorong Infrastructure Investigations - Draft Feasibility Assessment

Don't miss your chance to help inform the final Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Feasibility Assessment Report.

Throughout February 2022, the Department for Environment and Water has been consulting with the community on a Draft Feasibility Assessment Report on possible infrastructure options to help improve the health of the Coorong South Lagoon.

Whilst we had planned to meet with the community face-to-face at open house events in Meningie, Salt Creek, Goolwa and Kingston SE, we had to move these online due to COVID-19 conditions.

Live information webinars were held on 3 and 4 February 2022, with videos and presentations uploaded to the HCHB website.

Online Open House events were held on 10, 11, 15 and 16 February 2022, giving community one-on-one access to subject matter experts to discuss the draft assessment. Key themes from these sessions have also been captured and responded to in the form of an [FAQ document](#).

If you would like to have your say on the draft Feasibility Assessment Report, you can still do so by [completing the online survey](#) or emailing your submission to project.coorong@sa.gov.au by **5:00pm, Thursday 3 March 2022**.

Your feedback will be used to help form the final Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Feasibility Assessment Report.

The final Feasibility Assessment Report will inform a Business Case, outlining preferred options, with recommendations for further directed investigations that will inform potential construction under HCHB Phase Two.

It is envisaged that Phase Two of *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* will implement those long-term management options deemed feasible from 2022 onwards.

For full information, please visit: <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/coorong/get-involved>

Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Video

A [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin video](#) has been produced by the HCHB [Community Partnerships](#) Team to highlight the importance of restoring the Coorong to a healthy and resilient condition.

The Community Partnerships Project aims to raise awareness across the broader South Australian community of the importance of the Coorong, the environmental issues facing it and what is being done to continue to improve the Coorong's health.

The video looks at why a healthy Coorong is critical for the environment, First Nations, local communities, tourism operators and the overall health of the Murray-Darling Basin.

It also highlights the importance of the *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* Action Plan as a working vision to restore the Coorong's health to a resilient and naturally variable system that can provide habitat for a diversity of life under a changing climate.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)





Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Project Summaries

Part of the South Australian Government's overarching Project Coorong initiative, the *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* Action Plan outlines possible on-ground works, management tools, research, trials and investigations, and other activities between 2019 and 2024 to get the Coorong back on track for a healthy future.

To summarise and highlight the aims, activities and achievements of the six projects that make up the HCHB program, seven Project Summary documents have been created. These documents are designed to give an overview of the projects to date and will be updated throughout the life of the program.

Click here to view the Project Summaries:

- [Program Overview](#)
- [Community Partnerships](#)
- [Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Project](#)
- [Trials and Investigations](#)
- [On Ground Works](#)
- [First Nations Partnerships](#)
- [Water Resource Optimisation](#)

First Nations Partnerships: In Focus

The objective of the First Nations Partnerships project is to partner with Ngarrindjeri and First Nations of the South East to protect and promote First Nations culture, heritage and futures through the partnership and involvement in HCHB projects and program governance.

In this issue, we hear from Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) regarding their involvement with the Coorong Infrastructure Investigation Project (CIIP) Multi-criteria Analysis process.

Message from Daniel Lloyd: NAC Project Coordinator, *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* Program

The *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* [First Nations Partnerships](#) project between NAC and the Department for Environment and Water continues to build on strong positive relationships with First Nations and the department. The Partnership has enabled the Ngarrindjeri people to meet their cultural obligation to care for and manage Ruwe (Country).

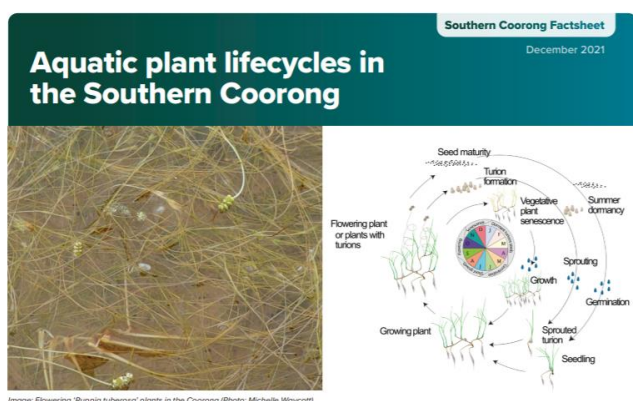
Over the past 18 months, Ngarrindjeri and the HCHB program have continued working together to build and develop the best outcomes for Ruwe and Ngarrindjeri People. The Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation has led cultural heritage surveys, on-country site visits and community consultation that has fed into the CIIP Multi-criteria Analysis process. The opportunity for a specific First Nations component in the rating of the CIIP options strengthens the collaborative efforts between Ngarrindjeri and the Department for Environment and Water to best accomplish a healthy Yarlwar-Ruwe (Sea Country).

NAC project staff have been able to engage with the Ngarrindjeri community through community workshops/forums in Murray Bridge, Meningie, Raukkan and Goolwa along with regular NAC Board updates and at the NAC AGM.

Joint Statement from Uncle Clyde Rigney, Snr NAC Chairperson & Tim Hartman, CEO

"Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation has appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and partner with the Department for Environment and Water through the HCHB program. The engagement framework that has been implemented and the willingness to incorporate Ngarrindjeri Knowledge, cultural values and interests was significant as this showed the importance of our interests being considered in the decision making process."

"Through partnerships like this which enables Ngarrindjeri to take a whole of Landscape approach to improving the health of Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe (sea country)."



recovery are outlined. A glossary of terms is provided and references to further recommended reading are included for each topic.

The fact sheets can be viewed here:

- [Nutrient cycling in the Southern Coorong](#)
- [The role of sediments in the eutrophication of the Southern Coorong](#)
- [Monosulfidic black oozes are anoxic and alter nutrient cycles](#)
- [Pathways to reversing the hypereutrophic nutrient state of the Coorong](#)
- [Connectivity and flushing](#)
- [The aquatic plants of the Southern Coorong](#)
- [Why aquatic plants are important](#)
- [Aquatic plant lifecycles in the Southern Coorong](#)
- [Algae affects recovery of aquatic plants](#)



Trials and Investigations: In Focus

This month we feature an update from another component of the HCHB [Trials and Investigations \(T&I\)](#) project working to fill critical knowledge gaps and build the scientific evidence-base needed to improve the long-term health of the Coorong.

Highlights from scientific investigations being undertaken by the [Goyder Institute for Water Research](#) T&I [climate adaptation](#) research team have recently been shared through the Institute's eNews. The Institute's researchers are also working on the [nutrient dynamics](#), [aquatic plants and algae](#), [food webs](#) and [waterbirds](#) components of the T&I project (featured in our [November 2021](#) and [December 2021](#) Project Coorong HCHB Community Updates).

The Goyder Institute is the delivery partner for five of seven research components of the HCHB T&I project, providing independent research to inform future management decisions for the region.

Climate Adaptation

The T&I climate adaptation component aims to inform the development of improved ways to identify the adaptation pathways that are required to ensure that the ecological values of the Coorong are maintained into the future under a changing climate.

Scientific Trials and Investigations Fact Sheets

Produced in partnership by leading scientists and environmental managers, a new suite of fact sheets has been published to support the [Desired State of the Southern Coorong discussion paper](#). The fact sheets provide an explanation of key nutrient processes in the Coorong, with a focus on the Southern Coorong and discuss the influence of connectivity and flushing on the system. Aquatic plants of the Southern Coorong are introduced and the impacts of algae on aquatic plant

"The Coorong and Lower Lakes is a region of immense cultural, environmental, economic and social value," said Dr Michael Dunlop from CSIRO, Research Lead for the T&I climate adaptation component. "Climate change is happening, and its impact will result in changes to the local environment and ecology, which in turn may affect how communities and First Nations interact with the region," he said.

"Through this *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* Climate Adaptation project, we are looking at the possible changes that may be observed in the region over the next 50 years, and what the needs are of decision makers facing the potential of transformative climate change," said Dr Dunlop. "This requires exploring the nature of future adaptation decisions and examining the consequences for current decision making."

"The main drivers of change over the next 50 years in the Coorong and Lower Lakes region resulting from climate change are likely to be decreased freshwater inflows from the River Murray, Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and the South East; increasing sea level; and warming of land and water. These will lead to changes in the region's ecology," said Dr Dunlop.

As an initial step, Dr Dunlop's team has been working closely with the Department for Environment and Water and the Goyder Institute to examine current management and research activities and how they are expected to contribute to achieving the current management objectives for the Coorong.

"Using a methodology called 'Theory of Change', we have been able to identify the connections between multiple management activities and other interventions affecting the Coorong and Lower Lakes and the desired outcomes identified for the region," said Dr Dunlop. "This has led to defining a number of narratives about how change has previously occurred in the region."

"One key area has become clear from our research," said Dr Dunlop, "that the Coorong and Lower Lakes system could change in novel ways as the impacts of climate change are observed. By examining how vulnerable key ecological and social elements and decision-making processes are to future scenarios and trajectories of change, we can develop an understanding of the pathways for adaptation of the region to ensure the region continues to support its value to the community".

Read the [full Goyder News article about T&I climate adaptation research](#).

We'll share more updates from T&I researchers in future editions of the HCHB Community Update. You can also sign up to receive the Goyder Institute's monthly newsletter by [subscribing to their eNews](#). Thanks to the Goyder Institute for contributing to this article.

Coorong Partnership Communique

The 16th meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 3 February 2022 via videoconference.

Coorong Partnership Chair, the Hon Dean Brown AO, opened the meeting by acknowledging that the Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon David Speirs MP, has extended the Partnership to the end of 2022. The Partnership will continue to provide community insight, ideas and perspectives to inform government decision-making relating to the Coorong, and ensure that management actions taken incorporate local knowledge and contribute to achieving community needs and aspirations.

The [Department for Environment and Water](#) provided an update on the *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin's On-Ground Works Project* including the [recent announcement](#) that the Australian and South Australian governments are investing \$10 million to improve the quality and availability of waterbird habitat throughout the Ramsar-listed Coorong and Lower Lakes.

The Communique from this meeting and all other past Coorong Partnership meetings are available on the [Project Coorong Website](#).



Aerial view of the Murray Mouth and the Coorong
(Photo credit: DEW)

If you have any questions on this update, or would like to request a presentation on the project to your stakeholder group, or anything else related to Project Coorong, please contact the project team at projectcoorong@sa.gov.au.

The Government of South Australia's Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Program is jointly funded by the Australian and South Australian governments.



Australian Government



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