

Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Community Advisory Panel

Communiqué – 13 August 2026

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Community Advisory Panel (CAP) met on Ngarrindjeri Country at the Langhorne Creek Bowling Club on 13 August 2026.

Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin

Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

An update on the *Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin* program was provided by Program Leader Tom Overall.

Recent work included ecological surveys of marine habitats at proposed pump-out sites., with no difference in marine habitat detected between sites.

Members provided input to the proposed Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) methodology, which will help prioritise the preferred Coorong Infrastructure Advanced Concept Design option, and will be a part of the MCA scoring process.

Water Resource Operations

Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

Senior Operations Officer Damian Rowley updated members on the improvement in water resource conditions following winter rainfall across the southern connected basin and unregulated flows in the SA River Murray.

The Katarapko Floodplain regulator will be operated, using unregulated flow to raise various weir pools raised, but the majority of the water will make its way to the CLLMM.

Barrage operations have been focused on the use of automated gates to allow large volumes of water to be released to the Coorong between reversing events.

South Australia is now at full entitlement (1,850 GL) for 2026/27.

Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC)

The CLLMM CAP welcomed Brad Hartman to the role of Yarluwar-Ruwe Coordinator with NAC.

NAC, DEW and South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) Aquatic Sciences are holding a catfish yarnning circle with the Ngarrindjeri community in Murray Bridge in late August. Outcomes from this will inform the development of a SA River Murray Catfish Monitoring program.

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Simon Oster, District Ranger from the Upper Limestone Coast, provided an update on key NPWS activities.

Staff are preparing for the influx of bird flu, including targeted training, equipment and PPE stockpiling and planning.

Fox control will continue to be a priority in the area, and the purchase of Mundoo Island is a welcome addition to the reserve system.

H5 Bird Flu

Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)

Karl Hillyard (DEW) and Fran Walters (PIRSA) provided an update on the current status of H5 bird flu (avian influenza) at both a state and national scale.

Advice on how to report sick or dead birds was shared and complementary planning and on-ground activities to support at-risk birds and animals were discussed.

Questions from CAP members focused on how to keep pets and livestock safe, survival and immunity rates for native birds and which native species are most at-risk.

CAP members were encouraged to regularly check for updates at www.birdflu.gov.au

Commonwealth Environment Water Holder (CEHW)

Claire Settre and Hilary Johnson from the CEWH discussed planned 2026-27 environmental water delivery.

CEWH and DEW staff are working to deliver water for the environment via a directed release to South Australia, to enhance current unregulated flows.

Upstream Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism floodplain construction projects will limit the flow to SA in spring and early summer 2026.

Protecting waterbird populations will be a key consideration for Basin-scale water delivery in 2026-27.

Water for the environment and barrage operations

Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

Adrienne Rumbelow, Program Leader – CLLMM, provided an update on modelled improvements in

lake levels and barrage flow in winter and early spring due to unregulated flows.

While salinity and water level conditions are improving, this is likely to be short-lived once unregulated flows cease and impediments to water for the environment delivery begin in spring.

Modelling shows that more water for the environment is required for the CLLMM in September 2026, November 2026 to January 2027 and March to April 2027.

CAP members emphasised the importance of continuing higher barrage flows through to late spring/early summer for Coorong ecology, and were supportive of prioritising barrage flows from Tauwichee barrage from September.

Updates

CLLMM CAP Terms of Reference have been updated and nominations will be sought for a deputy CLLMM CAP Chair to support Julie Barrie (Chair).

A joint meeting with the CLLMM Scientific Advisory Group will be held on Thursday 5 November 2026 at SARDI Aquatic Sciences, West Beach.

Three expressions of interest were received for vacant CLLMM CAP positions, and new members will be invited to attend the November 2026 meeting.

Next meeting

The CAP will reconvene on **Thursday 5 November 2026** at the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre, West Beach.

We thank the attendees for their meaningful contributions and insights throughout these sessions, a great opportunity to connect and share.

The CLLMM CAP is coordinated by The Living Murray and Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin programs.



Winter Coorong Ruppia tuberosa monitoring.