

Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 10

6 May 2021



The tenth [Coorong Partnership](#) meeting was held on 6 May 2021 at Raukkan Aboriginal School, hosted by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation and Raukkan Community Council.

Partnership member and Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation Chairperson, Clyde Rigney Snr, provided an overview of the Raukkan community and led a site tour at the conclusion of the formal meeting agenda. Raukkan is situated on the shores of Lake Alexandrina. Raukkan means "ancient meeting place" in Ngarrindjeri language and has been a meeting place for thousands of years. The Partnership noted the history and the significance of the site to the Ngarrindjeri. Raukkan is also an important place of learning for the community. Community can come to Raukkan to learn about the Ngarrindjeri cultural framework and the importance of land, language, lore and ceremonies. The Partnership noted the importance of governance to Ngarrindjeri and that it is essential that Raukkan is community-led.

Fifteen full time, part time and casual staff have commenced roles as Ngarrindjeri Rangers, as part of the Commonwealth's Indigenous Ranger program. The rangers will deliver a number of environmental and cultural on ground activities in the community including in the running of the community nursery. The rangers will also be participating in formal training to increase the capacity of the Raukkan community in the future. The Partnership noted the exceptional work that has been undertaken by the community in establishing the new plant nursery.

The Partnership discussed the new walking trail being installed at Raukkan, which will form part of the Murray Coorong Trail. The Partnership noted the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation's role in leading a strategic regional approach to cultural tourism. The Partnership expressed the importance of the local community having carriage of tourism opportunities and that tourism should be a viable community led arena into the future.

The [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin](#) (HCHB) program provided an update on the [Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Project](#), which is progressing feasibility investigations of concepts to improve the long-term health of the Coorong South Lagoon. Preliminary modelling indicates that a doubling of automated barrage gates, even under a range of 'best case' operational scenarios, would not sufficiently reduce salinities in the Coorong South Lagoon. Positive benefits from further barrage automation would only be experienced at a very local level in the Coorong North Lagoon. The Partnership noted that community members determined that the most important, essential outcome, is finding the option/s that best contribute to improving the ecology of the Coorong South Lagoon as determined by scientific evidence, given water availability and constraints. On this basis, the Partnership advised that it supported the recommendation that additional automated barrages should be discounted from further consideration under this specific this investigation.

The HCHB On-Ground Works Project provided an overview of the proposal to restore the Teringie Wetland adjacent to Raukkan. The Partnership noted that the Department for Environment and Water has partnered with the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation and the Raukkan Community Council on the proposal, which has been submitted to the Commonwealth for funding consideration. The Partnership viewed the Teringie wetland complex and reiterated their support for the proposed upgrades.

The HCHB Science Integration Team updated the Partnership on the forthcoming revision to [the desired state of the Southern Coorong – discussion paper](#). The discussion paper provides an up-to-date, shared understanding of the current state of the Southern Coorong, explains what might happen if we 'do-nothing', presents an overview of the 'desired state', and provides guiding principles on how to achieve the desired state. As the HCHB Scientific Trials and Investigations progress, technical reports will inform an annual State of the Coorong synthesis report, which will be further distilled into a community facing discussion paper to guide management priorities and actions to help restore its ecological character. The Partnership expressed their appreciation of the work that has gone into the review of the discussion paper and looks forward to the revised suite of products being released later in the year.

Partnership Chair, Dean Brown, noted the outstanding presentation of the Raukkan community and thanked Clyde Rigney Snr, the Raukkan Aboriginal School and Raukkan Community Council for their warm reception. The Partnership will next convene on 10 June 2021 at Coorong District Council, where the agenda will focus on tourism and economic development.

Further Information

If you would like to receive regular updates about [Project Coorong](#) please email: projectcoorong@sa.gov.au

