

# Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 11

10 June 2021



The eleventh meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 10 June 2021 at Taillem Bend, hosted by the [Coorong District Council](#).

The Partnership was updated on [Alexandrina Council's](#) Sugars Beach Icon Project, which proposes a range of possible improvements (such as boardwalks, viewing platforms, shelter facilities, toilets, and a visitor information hub) on Hindmarsh Island immediately opposite the Murray Mouth to enhance the visitor experience of this iconic location. [Alexandrina Council](#), along with the [Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation](#) and Partnership representatives, recently met with the Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon David Speirs MP and staff from the Premier's Office to discuss the project and options for leveraging local, state and Commonwealth funding. The Partnership noted the opportunity for cultural tourism to be incorporated into the project and importance of continued Ngarrindjeri involvement. The Partnership reaffirmed their commitment to supporting this project going forward, including as a conduit between stakeholders.

The [Coorong District Council](#) provided an overview of the Murray Coorong Trail project. The Murray Coorong trail was initiated in 2015 as a collaborative project between the [Rural City of Murray Bridge](#), the [Mid Murray Council](#) and the Coorong District Council. The project will see the development of a recreation trail for walking and bike riding, which will eventually stretch 450 kilometres from Cadell in the Riverland to Salt Creek in the [Coorong National Park](#). The proposed trail route will traverse council reserves, levee banks, National Parks and reserves and crown land, linking river towns, major tourism attractions and existing trail networks. The Partnership agreed that the Murray Coorong Trail offers the potential for exponential growth in tourism and recreation throughout the region. The Partnership encouraged Council to prioritise high-use areas first to maximise the return on investment and to consider opening up access to the southern end of Tauwichee barrage. The Partnership noted that a 5 kilometre loop trail and 360 degree viewing platform currently being constructed at Raukkan will create opportunities for cultural tourism. The Partnership noted the complexity of the project and congratulated the Council's on their progress thus far.

The [Department for Environment and Water](#) (DEW) updated the Partnership on the Coorong Visitor Experience Plan. DEW is working with local councils and the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation to bring collective aspirations and priorities into a holistic plan for enhancing the visitor experience in the region. The Partnership highlighted the importance of seeking and responding to visitor feedback to improve the visitor experience. The Partnership noted the importance of commercial tourism operators having an understanding of the cultural significance of the region and recommended that they could participate in cultural training as part of their licencing process.

The DEW [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. The Partnership were presented with preliminary ecological interpretation results and discussed the proposed decision making framework that will inform the final feasibility assessment later in the year. The Partnership noted the level of rigor that has gone into the feasibility investigations and welcome the advice that the next round of community meetings will be held throughout the region in mid-July 2021.

The Partnership expressed concern that misinformation is being circulated regarding the scope of potential management solutions for the Coorong currently under feasibility investigation. In particular, individuals have stated at a number of community meetings that targeted dredging of Coorong flow constrictions to improve connectivity would involve the use of explosives. The Partnership and DEW categorically advise that the option for targeted dredging of Coorong flow constrictions to improve connectivity has never considered, and has no plans to consider, the use of explosives in the Coorong.

The [Limestone Coast Landscape Board](#) provided an update to the Partnership on the [Our Coorong, Our Coast](#) program which is focused on a range of activities to restore the ecological character of the Coorong and Limestone Coast and maintain the project sites as healthy and resilient habitats for threatened species. The Partnership welcomed news of the recent Orange Bellied Parrot sightings on Hindmarsh Island, believed to be the first South Australian sightings of the critically endangered species in eight years.

Partnership Chair, Dean Brown, thanked the [Coorong District Council](#) for their hospitality and the elected members who observed the meeting. The Partnership will next convene on 29 July 2021.

## Further Information

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