

# Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 13

2 September 2021



The thirteenth meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 2 September 2021 at Goolwa, hosted by [Alexandrina Council](#).

The focus of the meeting was to explore tourism trends and opportunities across the region. Partnership member Joel Hirsch - who is the Marketing Manager for [Spirit Australia Cruises](#), which operates [Cruise the Coorong](#) - shared his firsthand knowledge of visitor trends in the [Coorong National Park](#).

The detailed presentation highlighted that the northern end of the Coorong National Park has a multitude of boat or canoe based access points and is experiencing large and increasing visitation throughout the year. By way of example:

- One commercial tour operator alone attracted nearly 10,000 clients across more than 580 tours in 2020/21.
- One canoe-based operator provided 1,000 guided tours, 400 self-guided tours, hosted 2,500 students, and had 200 overnight customers staying over 600 nights in the Coorong.
- New commercial tour operators have started operations, coinciding with the Great State Vouchers.
- Bespoke high-end 4WD experiences are also available.

The Partnership was briefed on features and trends in camping and day visitation, as well as commercial tourism operator perspectives. The Partnership noted that schools and outdoor educators utilise the Park in large numbers through the year and recognised the success of the [Great State Voucher scheme](#) in getting people travelling to the Coorong and helping to keep tourism active in South Australia.

The Partnership identified a number of long-existing and emerging opportunities to enhance the visitor experience of the Coorong National Park and resolved to write to the Minister for Environment and Water to recommend a number of improvements to enhance the Coorong visitor experience be prioritised for investment and action, including:

- The reinstatement of toilets and installation of a boardwalk at Barker Knoll campground;
- Extension of Goolwa Barrage lock operating hours during summer months; and
- The installation of destination jetty at Godfrey's Landing, and possibly opposite Sugars Beach.

The [Department for Environment and Water](#) (DEW) provided an update on the [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin](#) (HCHB) program, advising that the [Water Resource Optimisation Project](#) is currently monitoring the ecological response of increased flows to the South Lagoon from the South East Flows Restoration Project.

The [National Parks & Wildlife Service](#) (NPWS) provided an update to the Partnership on the [Coorong National Park](#) explaining that the Ocean Beach is being impacted by big seas and tidal surges at this time of year. This is particularly prevalent south of Salt Creek, and will only continue with climate change. The Partnership discussed the flow on impacts to the dunes, with unauthorised 'back tracks' being created, and potential impacts to Cultural Heritage. The Partnership noted the ongoing challenges faced by NPWS rangers to monitor visitor behaviour in the park due to the limited ability to access some locations.

The [Limestone Coast Landscape Board \(LCLB\)](#) 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 recognised the importance of ongoing pest plant and animal control through the program, and noted the forthcoming aerial deer control program in the Park, scheduled for September 2021.

The Partnership will next convene on 14 October 2021 in Adelaide.

## Further Information

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