

# Katarapko Floodplain

## 2025-26 proposed environmental water operations



Operation of the Katarapko Floodplain environmental watering infrastructure is planned between July and December this year. The final timing and scale of operation will depend on River Murray flow and anabranch conditions, and on the availability of environmental water and approvals.

Katarapko Floodplain has experienced minimal rainfall and inundation since spring 2023, and recent monitoring results suggest general site-wide decline with the rapid transition to a dry phase.

With dry conditions and low river flows, a low-level inundation operation of the Splash environmental regulator is planned in conjunction with a Lock 4 weir pool raising. This would involve raising water levels behind the regulator by 2.2 metres (up to 12.2 m AHD) along with a 30 cm raising of Lock 4. These actions will inundate approximately 480 hectares of low-lying floodplain at Katarapko and along the Lock 4 weir pool, replenishing soil moisture, improving tree condition and supporting seedlings that began growing after the 2022-23 River Murray flood.

If only a low-level operation of the Splash can be undertaken, targeted pumping to Piggy Creek complex (creek and lagoon) and Boytie's (Carparks) Lagoon will occur, as both of these wetlands have not been inundated since the 2022-23 River Murray flood.

Pumping to Piggy Creek complex is expected to restore a mosaic of shallow and deep-water foraging habitats for waders and encourage greater frog breeding opportunities. Pumping will also support eucalypt seedlings that established after the 2016 and 2022-23 floods to reach maturity. Pumping to Boytie's (Carparks) Lagoon will support fringing mature trees and encourage establishment of aquatic vegetation.

If water resource conditions improve and higher flows occur, a medium-level managed inundation operation is planned, which proposes raising water levels behind the Splash environmental regulator by 2.9 m, and raising weir pool 4 by 30 cm. This action will inundate approximately 735 hectares of low-lying floodplain and lignum, and connect anabranch creeks to large temporary wetlands, therefore increasing habitat areas and breeding opportunities for waterbirds, frogs and macroinvertebrates.

If higher flows eventuate, a higher-level inundation could be undertaken, raising the Splash regulator further to 3.2 metres above normal levels to maximise site-scale connectivity and inundate up to 1,140 hectares, including floodplain woodlands and lignum shrublands.



# Access to Katarapko Floodplain during environmental watering operations

When water for the environment is delivered to Katarapko Floodplain, the **Murray River National Park** will remain open for the public to enjoy where possible. However, there will be some restrictions in access to parts of the park.

## Boating

Watercraft passage through the regulator will not be possible, but kayaks and canoes can be carried around the Splash regulator. Users will need to be prepared to carry vessels approximately 100 metres.

## Access roads

The operation may result in the temporary closure of some public access tracks and roads on the Katarapko Floodplain. Further information will be available on the National Parks and Wildlife South Australia webpage at [www.parks.sa.gov.au](http://www.parks.sa.gov.au)

Visitors to the Murray River National Park are reminded to stay on public access tracks and proceed with caution on tracks they are unfamiliar with. It is essential to adhere to park signage and not enter any flood waters. It is an offence to drive off-road or leave formed tracks in any South Australian park or reserve.

## Campsites

Some campsites and day visit areas may be closed during the peak of the operation; therefore, it is essential you **remember to book before you go**. To confirm availability of campsites and purchase campsite permits, please visit National Parks and Wildlife South Australia at or call (08) 8595 2111.



An Australian boobook spotted during autumn 2025 woodland bird surveys. (Photo. Belinda Cale)

## More information

For further information about Katarapko Floodplain, visit [environment.sa.gov.au/katarapko-floodplain](http://environment.sa.gov.au/katarapko-floodplain)

If you would like to be notified of future floodplain operation updates, please join our subscriber list at [environment.sa.gov.au/ewater-subscribe](http://environment.sa.gov.au/ewater-subscribe) and select the locations you are interested in. Alternatively, you can email your preferred details to [DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au)

Updates regarding water for the environment planning, including operations at Pike, Katarapko and Chowilla floodplains, weir pool manipulations and other activities are also provided in the weekly SA River Murray Flow Report (released each Friday). To view the Flow Report or subscribe to receive it directly to your email, please visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/flow-report](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/flow-report)

If you have further queries about the proposed floodplain operations, please contact the Department for Environment and Water's Environmental Water Team at [DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au)