



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Date: 2 May 2024

### **TAKING TO THE SKIES TO GET THE LATEST SALINITY INFORMATION**

MILDURA residents can expect to see a low-flying helicopter equipped with a transmitter and receiver coil over coming week, as leading-edge technology is used to capture information on sub-surface salinity.

The helicopter is likely to be visible in the Mildura, Merbein, Irymple, Nichols Point and Red Cliffs areas this weekend and most of next week, as part of the Mallee Salinity Survey, which is currently underway in the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region.

“This is the third time an aerial survey of this type has been undertaken in our region, but it is the first survey to be undertaken since 2007, so we are keen for people to understand what the helicopter is doing and why it is so important,” Mallee CMA Chair Allison McTaggart said.

The survey involves using airborne electromagnetic technology to collect data to model groundwater up to 40 metres below the surface. The final data will show salinity and groundwater trends over time at a regional scale, helping to support the protection of the environment and the region’s \$1.3 billion irrigated horticulture sector.

The survey began in late March at Lindsay Island, near the South Australian border, and will gradually progress east to conclude at Nyah, Victoria in June/July. In total, more than 21,500 kilometres will be surveyed.

Survey flights will focus on irrigation areas and the Murray River channel, with the helicopter flying about 90 metres above ground and the transmitter and receiver coil approximately 30-40 metres above ground. All flights are undertaken in accordance with Civil Aviation Safety Authority requirements and required approvals.

The survey technology causes no harmful effects to humans or livestock, but the low-flying helicopter may cause minor annoyance to some animals for a short period of time. Livestock owners are asked to consider how their animals may react and to plan accordingly.

“While the survey flights will avoid built up areas, it is likely people will see the helicopter at some point,” Ms McTaggart said.

“Thank you to the industry bodies, equine groups and many community members who have helped inform the survey’s flight plans and get the word out about the survey.”

Informal drop-in sessions will be held across the region over the coming weeks for people to learn more about the survey. Visit [www.malleecma.com.au](http://www.malleecma.com.au) for more information on the Mallee Salinity Survey.

## ENDS



**Above:** The Mallee Salinity Survey is being undertaken by a low-flying helicopter equipped with a transmitter and receiver coil underneath it.

**Below:** Community members inspect the helicopter and infrastructure during a recent open day in Mildura.



### *Background information:*

*The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is a statutory authority established to ensure that natural resources in the region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way. Its work is based on science and delivered through meaningful partnerships with local organisations such as Landcare, community groups, and government agencies in the Victorian Mallee. For more information visit [www.malleecma.com.au](http://www.malleecma.com.au)*