

2024

Musk Duck Wetland

CASE STUDY



Location: Musk Duck Wetland





Traditional Owners Arty, Jarryd, Shane, Jason, Dwayne, Tim, Dylan, Carolyn, Shane, Stephanie at Musk Duck Wetland

“It’s flourishing, it looks so good.”



Dylan Lawson at Musk Duck Wetland

Dylan Lawson is standing beside Musk Duck Wetland, a 4.7-hectare (ha) wetland in the far north-western corner of Victoria, about 540 metres from the Murray River.

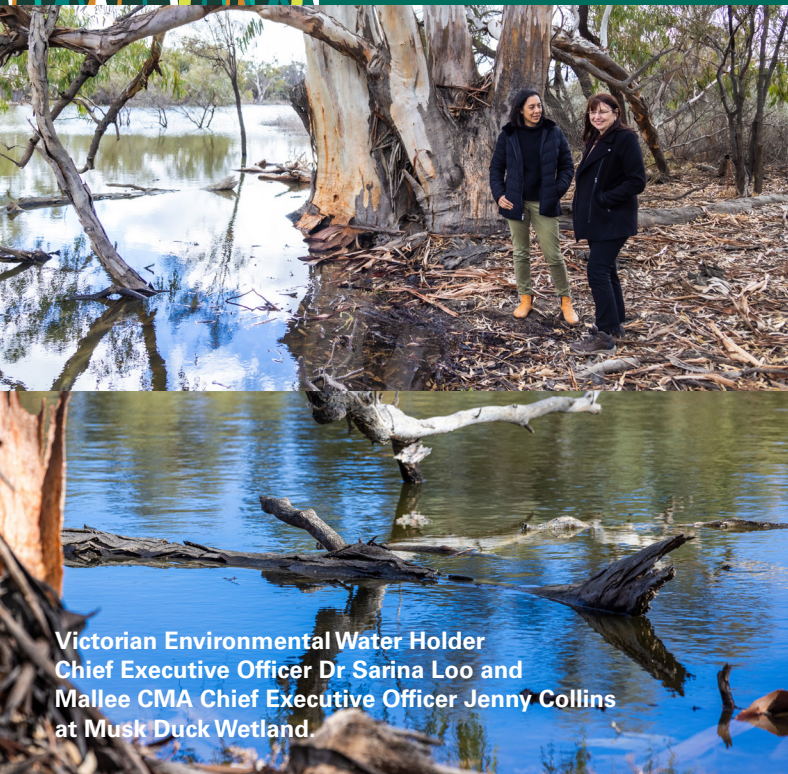
There’s about 100 ML of water for the environment in the wetland in front of him. It’s a peaceful place to be, you can hear the birds calling and, not too far away, there’s people chatting around the campfire.

But it’s more than just water Dylan is looking at – it’s self determination in action, and a demonstration of what true partnerships can deliver.

“I’d never seen water in here, except in the last floods that came through, so it’s been a long time in the making to get water into Musk Duck,” Dylan says. He is a Traditional Owner and an Aboriginal Water Officer from the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC), a custodian of this incredible landscape.

The wetland is on Ned’s Corner Station, a 30,000 ha conservation property that Trust for Nature is transitioning back to the ownership of FPMMAC. The lagoon filled naturally in the 2022 Murray River flood, but after being dry for the previous five years and a hot summer, it didn’t take long for the floodwater to disappear.

In short, Traditional Owners were keen to see water back in Musk Duck Wetland. Together with the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA), the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) and the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA), hopes of delivering water -for the environment to Musk Duck became a reality.



Victorian Environmental Water Holder
Chief Executive Officer Dr Sarina Loo and
Mallee CMA Chief Executive Officer Jenny Collins
at Musk Duck Wetland.



Mallee CMA Coordinator Environmental
Water Delivery Emma Collins.

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Water for the environment is water allocated and managed specifically to improve the health of rivers, wetlands and floodplains. Victoria has a robust process for managing water for the environment and this had to be negotiated sensitively, while respecting the wishes of the Traditional Owners.

FPMMAC worked closely with Mallee CMA, VEWH and DEECA to navigate the watering of Musk Duck, including everything from On-Country meetings to procurement and pre-delivery monitoring of environmental values.

“I’ve had help from the CMA – Emma Collins and her team – just to be able to get the contractor to come along and be able to pump the water in there, it’s been a good journey along the way,” recounts Dylan.

Emma Collins, who coordinates the Mallee CMA’s watering team, says it’s been a two-way exchange of knowledge.

“Dylan and FPMMAC learnt what we do, the process we follow [to deliver water for the environment] and we learnt what they do and got to understand more about their cultural values,” Emma says.

FPMMAC’s River Rangers, Seed Collection Team and Safe Haven crew will all be involved in monitoring environmental outcomes at Musk Duck Wetland, with Mallee CMA, VEWH and DEECA keen to continue to build on the strong partnership established with FPMMAC.

“I just want to be able to see great vegetation around these wetlands, to be able to bring my kids out, tell them stories and showcase what I’ve achieved within First Peoples and what we have done as a whole collective,” Dylan says.

