



MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrating 20 years of The Living Murray at Hattah Lakes

STRONG partnerships and collaboration have been hailed as the key factors underpinning more than 20 years of environmental restoration at Hattah Lakes.

More than 50 key stakeholders recently attended a community event at Hattah-Kulkyne National Park celebrating more than two decades of The Living Murray (TLM) program at this iconic landscape. TLM has directly involved First Nations people, community members and partner agencies in restoring the health of the Hattah Lakes, and made it possible to construct and operate the permanent pumping infrastructure that has enabled water to be effectively and efficiently delivered to the system of inland lakes.

“This community event was a unique opportunity to celebrate long-term cooperation, restoration, and protection of the river system and the beautiful Hattah Lakes,” Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Chairperson Allison McTaggart said. The Mallee CMA delivers TLM in the Victorian Mallee.

“It’s been a joint effort and not one person, one agency, or one group could have achieved what we have been able to do by working together.”

TLM is one of Australia’s largest and most ambitious river restoration projects and is funded by Basin states. It focuses on maintaining the health of six carefully selected sites, including Hattah Lakes, along the Murray River. The program started in 2002 in response to community and scientific concerns about the declining condition of the river system.

The program has acquired an average of almost 500 GL of water for the environment and built several environmental works, including the permanent pumping infrastructure at Hattah Lakes, to help deliver this water to environmentally significant sites.

“TLM has made a tangible, long-lasting difference to Hattah Lakes. It has done far more than simply add water to dying floodplains. It has helped people reconnect to their Country, breathed life into sites on the brink of ecological collapse and laid the foundations for positive environmental management into the future,” Jenny Collins, Chief Executive Officer of the Mallee CMA, said.

The Hattah Lakes event included presentations showcasing the evolution of environmental watering at the site; as well as insights into significant increases in the population of Regent Parrots; major waterbird breeding events; and future plans to extend watering infrastructure to the northern lakes under the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VFMRP). The day also included a tour of the pump infrastructure.

The Living Murray is a joint initiative funded by the New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian and Commonwealth governments, coordinated by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.

Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Chief Executive Andrew McConville said TLM had forged an enduring partnership between governments at all levels to restore and protect the river system.

“The Living Murray is about sharing responsibility to restore and sustain the vital natural assets along the river system, harnessing community, First Nations’, farming, industry, and government goodwill to do the right thing, which is in all our interests,” Mr McConville said.

“Over the life of the program, the health of River Murray icon sites like Hattah Lakes has improved through the addition of infrastructure, land and river management practices and the delivery of water for the environment.”

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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