

# Merbein Community Update



*Friends of Merbein Common and Mildura Merbein Lions Club enjoying learning about turtles from EnviroEDU's Sarah Holmes.*

**WELCOME to the Autumn/Winter 2025 edition of the Merbein Community Update. This publication is one way for Mallee Catchment Management Authority to keep the community up to date with the latest work underway across Merbein Common.**

**From community events to environmental watering, exciting new projects and updates, you'll find it all right here in the Merbein Community Update.**

**It's published seasonally and it keeps us connected – we share your passion for the wonderful Merbein Common and we hope you enjoy your community update.**

## Let's learn about turtles

Mallee CMA was thrilled to host the "Let's Learn About Turtles" event recently, which brought together a group of turtle lovers from Friends of Merbein Common and the Mildura Merbein Lions Club.

The event was a chance to celebrate and discover more about some of the turtles we have right in our own backyards – quite literally!

Participants had the unique opportunity to get up close and personal with a turtle nest in the backyard of a local resident – a turtle lovers dream!

The group then converged at the Merbein Common for morning tea, followed by a very informative presentation on local turtle species, their habitat, threats and the importance of our local wetlands and waterways for these creatures to survive.

Participants got to meet broad shell turtles 'Fuzzball' and 'Clay', which was a highlight for everyone! The group also learned about the morphological differences of the three local turtle species, and examined broken turtle eggs to understand the impact predators are having. Attendees also learned about the TurtleSAT app, which is used by community members and nature enthusiasts to map the location of freshwater turtles in waterways and wetlands across the country.

So if you see a freshwater turtle (or a turtle nest), enter the location of your sighting in the TurtleSAT app! Your sightings will help land managers to track the movement and behaviour of turtles, helping to protect them and their offspring.

Find out more at [www.turtlesat.org.au](http://www.turtlesat.org.au)



## Thanks for minding the fence!

Regular visitors to Merbein Common will have noticed the installation of approximately 6km of fencing to protect important areas of native vegetation and cultural significance.

We check regularly to ensure the sites are remaining protected and it's great to see people are looking after the fences, with regular monitoring recording a significant decline in damage to the fence.

If you do see fencing around the Common, please respect the boundaries and keep out of restricted areas because these areas are worth protecting.



*Fencing, gates and bollards have been installed to protect areas of environmental and cultural significance at Merbein Common.*



## Keeping the billabongs beautiful



### Brickworks Billabong

Environmental water delivery to Brickworks Billabong is taking place during autumn 2025. As of the end of April, over 140 ML had been delivered to the wetland. Mallee CMA has been monitoring the water quality at the billabong to ensure it is suitable for the potential reintroduction of endangered Murray Hardyhead (*Craterocephalus fluviatilis*). These small bodied native fish have previously been found at Brickworks Billabong, but when the billabong reconnected to the Murray River during the 2022-23 floods, it's possible the small native fish moved into the river system and/or fell prey to predators.



### Cowanna Billabong

The regulator managing Cowanna Billabong's connection to the Murray River is currently open to allow flow and maintain a water level similar to the weir pool. Many waterbird species have been sighted at both Cowanna and Brickworks billabongs in recent weeks, including Black Winged Stilts and Little Pied Cormorant. Other notable sightings include Pink Eared Ducks, Black Swans, Australian Shoveler, Black-fronted Dotterel and Caspian Tern.



### Catfish Billabong

Catfish Billabong is a freshwater wetland that needs seasonal variations in water levels to be healthy. This means the billabong needs raised water levels every second year in late winter/early spring to give the fringing vegetation a drink, then the water levels gently recede through summer/autumn. The billabong last received water in 2023 when the new wall (which is part of the regulator structure) was commissioned. Since then, the billabong has been slowly drawing down to its current level, which is equal to the Murray River height. Water for the environment is planned to be delivered to Catfish Billabong in spring 2025. (subject to funding and water availability).



The Autumn edition of Mallee Farmer is now available! It's a great insight into the latest dryland farming research, training, trends and programs in the Mallee. Visit [malleecma.com.au/publications](http://malleecma.com.au/publications) to have a read and don't forget to sign up to the next edition to get it delivered straight to your inbox!

## How can I find out more?

**For more information on partnering with Traditional Owners and community members to enhance Merbein Common, contact:**

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