

On-Country Connections

You spoke, we listened.

Welcome to On-Country Connections - the first edition of the Mallee CMA newsletter for Traditional Owners. The aim of On-Country Connections is to keep Traditional Owners engaged and informed about the many events and projects facilitated by Mallee CMA. As the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Engagement Team, we are here to listen to, advocate for Traditional Owners in the water space, as well as represent the Mallee CMA. It's a responsibility we take seriously, and On-Country Connections is one more way for us to live up to that responsibility.

We hope to release On-Country Connections every 3 months, and we would love to receive your feedback about how to improve it as we go. After all, this is your Country, your newsletter, your voice. You matter.

Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP) update:

Western Projects

For projects that are planned for the area west of Mildura, all field works at Lindsay Island have been completed and site cards are currently being registered as part of the approvals process.

There is still more field work to be completed at Wallpolla Island and this is loosely planned for June. Once the Mallee CMA are able to fix a date, we will let the First People of Millewa Mallee know straight away. We expect this will take up to 2 weeks of field work.

Central Projects

For the project areas from Hattah to Swan Hill, all field work has been completed. The next step is for the Heritage Advisors to meet with Traditional Owners to discuss management conditions which forms part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan for each area. We are about to schedule a series of meetings and will be contacting relevant groups to meet in June. These meetings will be organized to occur on country at the project location, however we will also have a backup plan if the weather is poor.



Fieldwork underway at Lindsay Island for VMFRP

Water Literacy

Feedback from Traditional Owners who have participated in Water Literacy so far has been really positive. We've had great numbers of involvement, with lots of engagement, interaction and knowledge sharing taking place.

As the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Engagement Team, we love having the chance to spend time talking about water related issues with all of you, and we thank each and every one of you who have participated so far.

The Water Literacy Program will continue to be rolled out with all Traditional Owner groups, and we ask you to think about getting involved - it's vital that our people have the knowledge and tools needed to care for our Country long-term.

The next round of Water Literacy sessions will take place in May and June and we will be sending invitations out shortly to various groups, so keep an eye on your email.



Water Literacy being delivered at Swan Hill



Traditional Owners discussing planned environmental watering

Aspirations Project

We have been speaking with many of you about the Aspirations Project over the last few months. With the construction of VMFRP comes the opportunity for employment, empowerment and involvement, and we are here to help provide Traditional Owners with everything they need to have their voices heard!

So, we have started planning different training and knowledge sharing opportunities for Traditional Owners to engage in, including:

Accredited training in various construction qualifications (tickets and short courses)

This training will be available for groups to provide opportunities to gain tickets and skills in preparation for construction of VMFRP. We hope this supports each group with employment opportunities that may occur during the project and beyond.

Cultural Heritage site inspection at VMFRP locations

A knowledge sharing exercise based on feedback from Traditional Owners' wishes to make sure Cultural Heritage values are cared for during environmental watering.

Environmental Monitoring Training

Traditional Owners have provided significant feedback about monitoring the effects of environmental water. This training will provide an opportunity to learn how different types of monitoring takes place and how to get involved.

All of these opportunities are due to commence in May and will continue through to September 2025.

If you want to get involved, contact the Mallee CMA Aboriginal Engagement Team on 03 5001 8600.



Australian pelicans and Black Swans photographed at Lake Powell recently following environmental water delivery

Mallee CMA Environmental Watering

Environmental watering activities for Autumn will commence at the following locations and approximate dates:

Autumn 2024/25 – Murray Wetlands		
Event	Start Date	Status
Brickworks Billabong	March 2025	In Progress
Lake Hawthorn	Feb 2025	In Progress
Outlet Creek (Karadoc Swamp)	March 2025	In Progress

Autumn 2024/25 – Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Wetlands		
Event	Start Date	Status
Bulls Swamp	March 2025	In Progress
Clinton Shire Dam	March 2025	In Progress
Considines	March 2025	In Progress
John Ampt (House Dam)	March 2025	In Progress
R Ferriers Dam	March 2025	In Progress
Poyner	March 2025	In Progress
Round Swamp Bushland Reserve (Marlbed Lake Swamp/Newer Swamp)	March 2025	In Progress
Shannons Wayside	March 2025	In Progress
Towma (Lake Marlbed)	March 2025	In Progress

We know how important it is to Traditional Owners to have the opportunity to visit sites during watering. It's something we should all have the chance to share in, so we will be inviting Traditional Owners to view watering during these times and invitations will be emailed out shortly. Events for viewing watering will be unpaid events.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and organisations of the Victorian Mallee. We recognize the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with their lands and waters. We value partnerships with them for the health of People and Country.

We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging; and recognize the primacy of Traditional Owners' obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their traditional lands and water.

