

2025

Sandilong Creek


Location: Sandilong Creek, Riverside Golf Club, Mildura

CASE STUDY



Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Riverside Golf Club, Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Nature Glenelg Trust (NGT), and First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) worked in collaboration to restore the health of an iconic local waterway impacted by the 2022-23 floods.





A drawdown in 2023-24 allowed Sandilong Creek to rejuvenate, creek beds to consolidate and water quality to improve.

With its lush, green surrounds, clean, healthy water and abundance of native wildlife, it's no surprise Sandilong Creek, situated at Mildura's Riverside Golf Club, is a popular and beloved location for locals and visitors alike.

But this wasn't always the case.

In the wake of the 2022 floods in the region, Sandilong Creek was suffering.

With the floodwaters came overbank flows, which made way for an influx of carp that became trapped in the creek.

Carp are a non-native pest species that force native species to compete with them for food and shelter sources.

This was bad news for our native aquatic wildlife, including golden perch, freshwater catfish, broad-shelled turtles, eastern long-neck turtles and Murray River turtles that were already calling Sandilong Creek home.

Our native fish were fighting a losing battle against carp.

Mallee CMA CEO Jenny Collins said by early 2023, the water quality of Sandilong Creek was rapidly deteriorating and quickly becoming unhealthy.

"When a waterway is overrun with carp the way Sandilong Creek was, it becomes murky, unhealthy and without the right environment to flourish in, the surrounding flora and fauna don't have what they need to survive, not to mention the native fish," Jenny said.

Action needed to be taken to rectify the situation, and quickly.

Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Riverside Golf Club, Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Nature Glenelg Trust (NGT), and First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) came together to establish a plan that would not only aim to limit the population growth of carp, but assist in keeping them out long-term.


In order for the plan to work, each of the 5 organisations had to pitch in, bring their expertise to the table and collaborate effectively for the good of the wetland.

But how did they achieve this?

In Summer 2023, Mallee CMA closed the valves that were enabling water to flow to Sandilong Creek via the Murray River.

This allowed the creek to dry down for around 12 months, generating a huge increase in aquatic vegetation, improving the water quality, giving the soils in the creek bed a chance to consolidate, and creating the perfect blank canvas for the next steps of the project.

In late 2024, Mallee CMA secured funding from the VFA Fish Habitat Improvement Fund, which funded NGT to undertake electromagnetic fishing and fyke netting to remove carp from the waterway. This resulted in more than 140kg of carp being eradicated from the waterway. Custom mesh screens were also installed on the valves to help prevent carp from re-entering the creek.



Mallee CMA Project Officer Environmental Water Emma Johnston and Dylan Lawson, from the First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee, releasing native freshwater catfish into Sandilong Creek.



A collaborative effort between organisations has seen Sandilong Creek flourish.

Once the water level in the creek had reduced and the waterway was healthy and free of carp again, the valves were opened and Sandilong Creek was refilled, ready for its next tenants: endangered freshwater catfish!

In June 2025, around 120 catfish were translocated from Lake Lascelles in Hopetoun to their new home at Sandilong Creek, thanks to the VFA.

Riverside Golf Club kept their members and the public well-informed about the events at Sandilong Creek throughout the whole process, and we're thrilled to report the new inhabitants of the wetland are thriving and quite happy in their healthy, supportive surroundings.

Mallee CMA CEO Jenny Collins said the success of the project is a result of the collaborative effort between the organisations.

"At the end of the day, it's about protecting our wetlands, our waterways, our native flora and fauna and our ecology. That's our job and our interest at Mallee CMA, and when you come together with others who have the same care and objectives, that's where real change happens."



Local flora and fauna numbers have increased significantly at Sandilong Creek, with birds and wildlife alike flocking to the area.