

2025

# Hattah Matters

## A local's love of the lakes

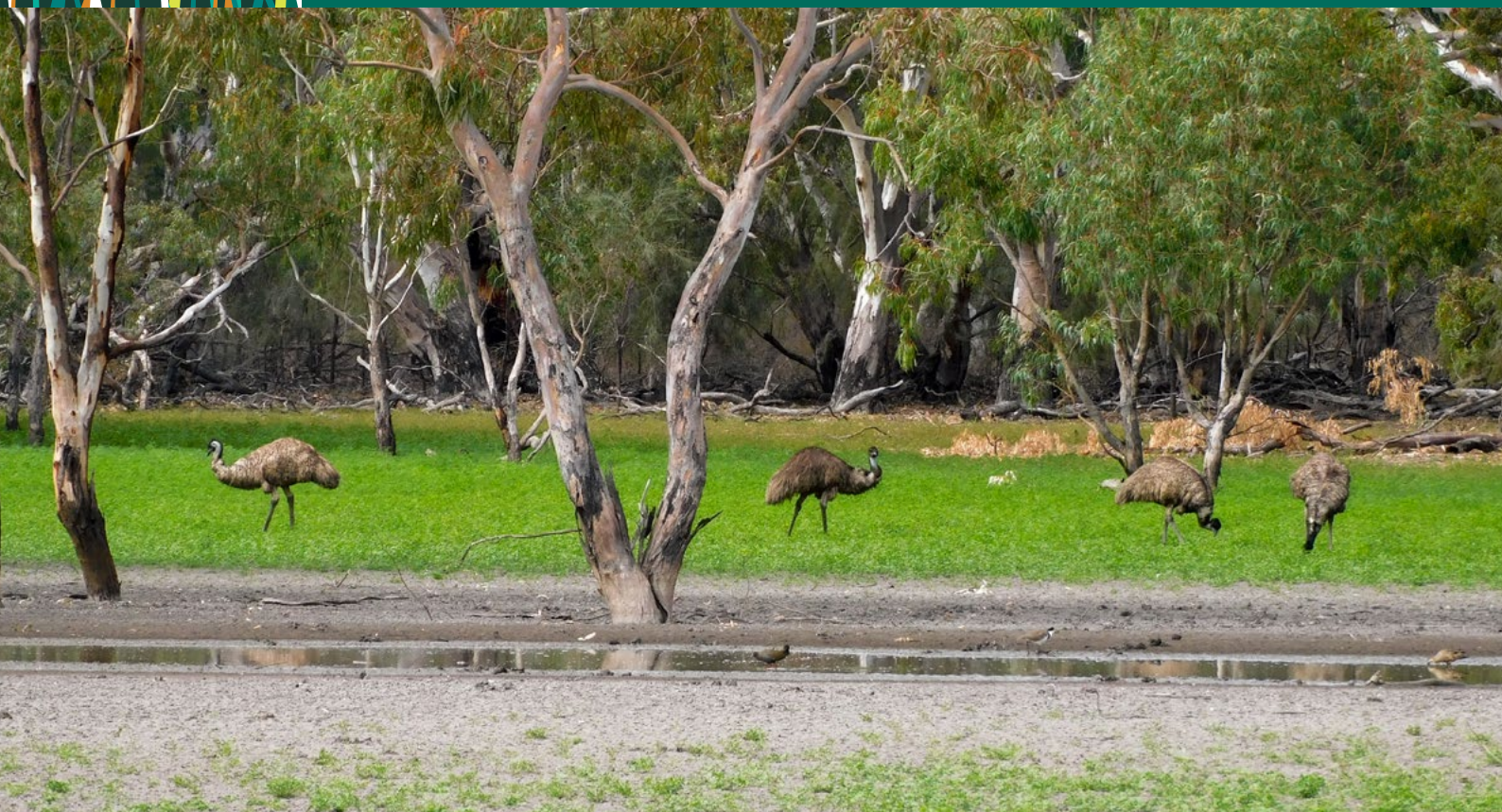
CASE STUDY



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*"When the water is delivered, the place just comes to life."*



**When Robert Stephens talks about Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, there's a passion in his voice that only comes when talking about something you truly love.**

He describes Hattah as a place where a "thousand adventures can happen in just one day."

A self-described Red Cliffs boy growing up, Robert considered Hattah a makeshift backyard as a child.

"I've spent a lot of time here (at Hattah), this place is a sort of backyard for me, my friends and my family, in a sense," he recalls.

"Throughout my childhood, we did some amazing stuff out here – we spent our time scaling the trees on behalf of what was, back then, forestry's, banding birds of prey; brown falcons, whistling eagles, wedge tailed eagles, and even sea eagles here in the lake system.

"As I got a little older, we'd boat through the lake systems during the flood waters exploring and really immersing yourself in the experience and the beauty.

"As I got older again and had my own family, we'd come down and camp here at Hattah, at Bitterang, Mournpall, Chalka Creek, those kinds of places."

Now, as owner of the popular nearby Hattah Roadhouse and Aussie Caravan Rental, Robert has seen first-hand the flow-on effects enjoyed when the lakes are full.

"When the water is delivered, the place just comes to life, no doubt about it," he said.





“The work Mallee CMA does in delivering water is absolutely vital – the significance of the environmental flows far outweighs not having them. From the natural floods that used to occur to the ones that can be created today – thank God for that, because they are a big part of what keeps this beautiful landscape so healthy and thriving.

“There are positive financial impacts with small businesses like mine, as tourists descend to Hattah and get into the park to explore, that’s just a fact.”

“When there’s water in these magnificent lakes, people from all over the country come out of the woodwork to come here and experience it. The yabbing, the fishing, the birdlife... having the environmental flows is just imperative. It’s an absolute game changer.”

Robert said the local connections, particularly the cultural significance, are equally vital.

“Being locals, we often take for granted the beauty in our own backyard. Even now, I still discover spots at Hattah that I had no idea about!

“The generational relationship with a place like Hattah is so vital – a place like this has got so much history and significance, and it’s important to keep that alive.

“There’s definitely been changes over the years, but I believe they are changes for the better. Things like more cultural protection, more guardianship over these really historically significant sites – these are changes that needed to happen to keep the beauty of Hattah intact.

“You can walk into Hattah, take a deep breath, stare into the distance and transport yourself 2,000 years back in time. And I think the significance of that is so damn important.”

