

Mallee CMA

Restoring flows to the Mallee floodplains



What is the Restoring Flows to the Mallee Floodplain (RFMF) program?

A package of works across 16 sites to restore more natural wetting and drying cycles at important wetlands and floodplains. These sites are in Victoria, between Boundary Bend and the South Australian border.

Why were these sites chosen?

Most of the RFMF sites have received water for the environment, using temporary levees and infrastructure that needs to be removed after each watering. These sites have been receiving water to minimise the degradation caused by the impacts of river regulation and climate change.

What “work” will RFMF involve?

RFMF involves replacing temporary infrastructure (e.g. earthen levees) with minor works such as small culverts and earthen banks. No permanent pumps will be built.

Why build works?

The RFMF works provide a long-term, sustainable solution to effectively and efficiently managing the delivery of water to wetlands and floodplains. These structures will not need to be removed after watering events or during a flood, reducing the impact on the landscape. The works are designed for a long asset life (50+ years) and will be fire and storm resistant.

Who has been involved in RFMF?

The program has been developed in close collaboration with Traditional Owners, landholders, partner agencies and a broad range of technical experts. Of the 16 sites, most are on public land managed by Parks Victoria. The remainder are on private land and supported by the landholders.

How do you know these works are the right answer for these sites?

Works make it possible to get water where it is needed, efficiently and effectively, using significantly less water than would be required to have flows in the Murray River high enough to flow over the banks and into wetlands. For example, at Catfish Billabong (on the Victorian Murray River floodplain at Merbein Common), the Murray River would need a flow of approximately 60,000 ML/day for two months to inundate the wetland. This would use approximately 3,360,000 ML in total, which is more than the capacity of Lake Eildon (3,300,000ML). By pumping water from the Murray River into Catfish Billabong, and using a regulator and wall to hold the water in the wetland, the total amount of water required is approximately 950ML.

For more information:

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The RFMF program is being implemented as part of Victoria’s obligations under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan through funding from the Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.