

Mallee Seasonal Watering Proposal 2026/27



Great egret, Yellow-billed spoonbill, Royal spoonbill and Australian white ibis at Catfish Billabong. Photo: Mallee CMA.

What is a Seasonal Watering Proposal?

Each year, the Mallee CMA develops four Seasonal Watering Proposals (SWPs) that identify sites that need water for the environment in the year ahead, and those that may need a drying phase.

Each SWP draws on ecological and hydrological objectives, scientific research, Environmental Water Management Plans (EWMPs), Traditional Owner and community input. Each SWP is submitted to the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), an independent statutory body responsible for managing Victoria's environmental water entitlements. The VEH uses SWPs to create an annual Seasonal Watering Plan, a legislative document that enables environmental water allocation delivery across Victoria.

This plan is published by June 30 each year.

The Mallee CMA prepares annual SWPs for:

- Murray Wetlands
- Hattah Lakes
- Lindsay-Mulcra-Wallpolla Islands
- Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline Wetlands

Which wetlands on the Murray River floodplain are planned to receive environmental water in 2026-27?

Subject to approval under the Seasonal Watering Plan, the following sites may receive environmental water in 2026-27:

Site	Timing
Potterwalkagee Creek (Mulcra Island)	Winter-Spring 2026
Scotties Billabong (Lindsay Island)	Spring 2026
Lindsay Mullaroo Connector (Lindsay Island)	Spring 2026
Stockyards (Lindsay Island)	Spring 2026
Woolshed Creek	Spring 2026
Robertson Wetland	Spring 2026
Sandy Creek/Lilyponds	Spring 2026
Bottle Bend	Spring 2026
Bullock Swamp	Spring 2026
J1 Creek	Spring 2026
Lindsay North	Spring 2026
Finnigans Creek	Spring 2026
Wallpolla Horseshoe	Spring 2026 – Autumn 2027
Brickworks Billabong	Spring 2026 – Autumn 2027
Lake Hawthorn	Spring 2026 – Autumn 2027
Kooring Lake	Spring 2026 – Autumn 2027
Mullaroo Creek (Lindsay Island)	Spring 2026 – Autumn 2027
Sandilong Creek	Summer 2026 – Autumn 2027
Butlers Creek / Ducksfoot Lagoon	Summer 2026 – Autumn 2027
Cowanna Billabong	Summer 2026 – Autumn 2027
Hattah Lakes	Autumn 2027
Crankhandle (Lindsay Island)	Autumn 2027
Wetland 33 (Lindsay Island)	Autumn 2027
Neds Corner Central	Autumn 2027
Outlet Creek (Karadoc)	Autumn 2027
Brown Swamp	Autumn 2027
Bidgee Lagoons	Autumn 2027
Wakool Creek	Autumn 2027
Fishers Lagoon	Autumn 2027
Bridge Creek	Autumn 2027

**Note – sites proposed are subject to water and funding availability and seasonal conditions.

Is watering just as important as drying?

Yes. Wetlands need both wet and dry times to remain healthy and to support the plants and animals that rely on them.

Drawing down/drying a wetland is important for several reasons, including:

- Exposed banks from reduced water levels allows mudflat plant species to grow;
- Surrounding River Red Gum and Black Box trees prefer not to have their roots permanently submerged;
- Emerging wetland plants contribute to soil nutrients;
- Reducing water levels helps lower carp numbers.

Which wetlands may start to dry?

The drying phases are mapped out in the SWPs which identify potential sites that require a drawdown (or drying) phase or may need to receive water for the environment in the year ahead.

A number of wetlands in the Mallee CMA region will not receive water for the environment during 2026–27 (please refer to the SWPs on our website for more information). These wetlands will continue to drawdown and some are likely to enter a dry phase.



Kayaking at Sandy Creek (Wallpolla Island). Photo: Mallee CMA.

In contrast with planned watering sites, drying of these waterbodies will create a mosaic of habitat types across the broader landscape which provides favourable conditions and supports a wider range of species across the landscape. Drying wetlands helps eradicate pest fish species (such as carp) and re-sets sites in preparation for future water deliveries and flourishing vegetation.

Which of the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline wetlands are proposed to receive water?

This year, most of the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline wetlands within the Mallee CMA region will be included in the SWP to give them the best chance of being included in the Seasonal Watering Plan. Site-by-site ecological assessments will then help inform and prioritise which sites receive water.



Spotted marsh frog at Stockyards Wetland (Lindsay Island). Photo: Mallee CMA.

How can I learn more?

For more information on this or any of the Mallee CMA's projects:

Follow @MalleeCMA on Facebook or Instagram

Visit our website at www.malleecma.com.au

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