



MEDIA RELEASE

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STAYING ALIVE IN THE MALLEE THIS SPRING

KEEPING key wetlands and ecosystems functional during dry times is the top priority of the region's environmental watering plan for the year ahead.

Only a modest amount of water will be delivered in spring 2019, as part of the Northern region of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder's seasonal watering plan. The plan nominates sites across the region to receive environmental water, depending on seasonal conditions.

"Due to the ongoing dry conditions we've been experiencing, water will only be delivered to high priority sites where the water will help protect endangered animals and continue to keep ecosystems working," explained Mallee CMA Environmental Water Manager Jonathan Belej.

A site to receive water is Lake Hawthorn, a shallow lake near Mildura that provides critical habitat and food for migratory birds.

"We know that Lake Hawthorn is a powerhouse at growing plankton, one of the key food sources for migratory birds, as hundreds of birds visit this wetland," Mr Belej said.

Lake Hawthorn will receive just enough water to maintain it as a shallow 30cm depth, an ideal water depth for water birds to wade in and for sunlight penetration, to grow plankton.

Mr Belej said environmental watering planned for spring aimed to keep important sites healthy during dry conditions.

"Even in dry times like we are currently experiencing, it's important to ensure our native fish and migratory birds have the water they depend on every year to feed and breed," he said.

"We are working to deliver this water effectively and efficiently to priority areas so our precious native fish, animals and plants have the best chance to survive and breed as we all wait for rain."

While the focus is clearly on the environmental benefits of this water, Mr Belej said the local community would also benefit through improved water quality and amenity.

"We've got new walking tracks and improved car parking at Lake Hawthorn, so while all the birds are on the lake, it's a great opportunity to get out and enjoy this picturesque spot," he said.

The flows are authorised by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder in line with its Seasonal Watering Plan 2019-20, which is available for download from <http://vewh.vic.gov.au/watering-program/seasonal-watering-plan>, with regular watering updates posted on the Mallee CMA website www.malleecma.com.au.



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ALL MEDIA INQUIRIES

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The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is a statutory authority established to ensure that natural resources in the region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way. Its work is based on science and delivered through meaningful partnerships with local organisations such as Landcare, community groups, and government agencies in the Victorian Mallee.

For more information visit www.malleecma.vic.gov.au