

Seasonal Watering Proposal

Hattah-Kulkyne National Park



About Hattah-Kulkyne National Park

Hattah-Kulkyne National Park lies in the Mallee country only 60 kilometres drive from Mildura, in far north-west Victoria. With its beautiful native woodlands, freshwater lakes and vast open spaces, it is a place deeply loved by many.

The Ramsar listed lakes provide important refuge for birds, animals, and vegetation, while the significant cultural and social values of the landscape continue to connect Traditional Owners and community members with this amazing part of the country.

About Hattah Lakes and The Seasonal Watering Proposal

Hattah Lakes are a system of interconnected wetlands intermittently filled by creeks connected to the Murray River. When river flows are not high enough to naturally connect the creeks to the river, environmental infrastructure can be used to get water to where it is needed most without impacting on other river users. Hattah Lakes remains one of the best sites in the Murray-Darling Basin to witness the life-giving power of efficient water management.

The Seasonal Watering Proposal (SWP) outlines the Mallee Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) proposed priorities for delivery of environmental water for the Hattah Lakes in 2021-22.

The lakes in the system are currently dry, with water not being received since 2017, with the exception of Lake Kramen which received water in 2019. Planned watering is to take place in May 2021 and should allow water to be pumped into 11 of the 18 lakes, nine of these lakes are designated Ramsar wetlands. By the time of the May delivery, the lakes will have been completely dry for 14-36 months, the Red Gum woodland and Black Box woodland has similarly been dry for 36 months.

Why is the water necessary?

Rainfall across the basin during 2020-21 was *average to above average* as a result of a La Nina event over the preceding year. Although the rainfall during 2020-21 did allow some storages to fill and widespread rainfall generally helped alleviate some demand early in the year, the rainfall pattern was erratic and consisted of large, short rainfall events rather than prolonged rainfall.

This pattern of rainfall was beneficial to dryland farming, understory floodplain vegetation and the development of lake bed herbland. However, the rainfall did not contribute to inflows into the lakes and floodplains of the Hattah Lakes.

The extended duration of dry wetlands, coupled with average rainfall at the icon site, has assisted in the development of terrestrial lake bed herbland across the wetlands including the deep semi-permanent wetlands.

Under current basin conditions, the intent is to deliver water to the red gum communities on the lower elevations of the floodplain where trees are starting to show a decline in canopy condition as a result of limited flooding and the previous hot, dry summers.



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Community

Hattah Lakes is a sought after recreation destination, with camping, walking, bike riding and canoeing very popular activities, providing great opportunities for the community to connect with nature and learn about the importance of the lakes and the ecosystem they support. These groups will benefit from the filling of the lakes, along with local businesses including tourism and school groups.

“Delivering water for the community and our environment”

What are the benefits of the Seasonal Watering Program?

Environment

Some benefits of the seasonal watering may include: increased wetland productivity; breeding of water birds including waterfowl, swans, grebes and cormorant; development of emerging macrophyte communities; improvement in condition of Red Gum woodlands and the re-establishment of small-bodied fish communities in the lakes.

The site is an important location for apiarists who use the site for beehives. Delivery of environmental water to the lakes helps improve the health of bees ensuring they are in optimum condition for pollinating local horticultural orchards.



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Benefits of Autumn delivery

Autumn delivery reduces the chance of introducing carp to the lakes as there will be limited juveniles in the Murray and larger fish are less likely to be pumped through. This means aquatic vegetation will be able to establish undisturbed by carp turning the wetland base over.

“Hattah Lakes remains one of the best sites in the Murray-Darling Basin to witness the life-giving power of efficient water management.”

Who was involved in the Consultation process?

Mallee CMA engaged with a variety of stakeholders in the consultation process for the development of the Seasonal Watering Proposal. These included Aboriginal Community members and Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Water Catchments (Murray River), Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), landholders and farmers surrounding Hattah lakes, local tourism operators, specialist community user groups, and Conservations and Landcare Groups.



For further information about water delivery events contact the Mallee CMA office or visit our website

www.malleecma.com.au
Alternatively email
reception@malleecma.com.au
or call 03 50514377

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) acknowledges and respects Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and organisations. We recognise the diversity of their cultures and the deep connections they have with Victoria's lands and waters.

We value partnerships with them for the health of people and country. The Mallee CMA Board, management and staff pay their respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the primacy of Traditional Owners' obligations, rights and responsibilities to use and care for their traditional lands and waters.

Table 1: Sites proposed to receive water for the environment via pump infrastructure under four climatic conditions within the Mallee CMA catchment region.

Site	Drought	Dry	Average	Wet*
Brickworks Billabong	■	■	■	■
Lake Hawthorn	■	■	■	■
Koorlong Lake	■	■	■	■
Wallpolla Horseshoe	■	■	■	■
Robertson Creek	□	■	■	■
Bullock Swamp	□	□	■	■
Burra North	■	■	■	■
Burra South	■	■	■	■
Lake Powell	□	□	■	■
Lake Carpul	□	□	■	■
Hattah Lakes (minus Lake Kramen)	□	■	■	■
Lake Wallawalla	□	■	■	■
Burra South Proper	■	■	■	■
Nyah	■	■	■	■
Vinifera	■	■	■	■
Robertsons Wetland	□	□	■	■
Bidgee Lagoon	□	■	■	■
Fishers Lagoon	□	□	■	■
Scotties Billabong	□	■	■	■
Crankhandle	□	■	■	■
Lindsay-Mullaroo Connector	□	■	■	■
Stockyards	■	■	■	■
Mulcra Horseshoe	■	■	■	■
Mulcra Floodplain Inundation	□	□	■	■
Finnigans Creek	□	■	■	■

□ No water ■ Proposed water delivery

*Inundation may occur via natural inundation.

Table 2: Sites upstream of weir infrastructure that are proposed to receive water under four climatic conditions. Note: Listed below are weir pool sites, not direct allocation.

Site	Drought	Dry	Average	Wet*
Lindsay River North	□	■	■	■
Mullaroo Creek	■	■	■	■
Cowanna Billabong	■	■	■	■
Butlers Creek	■	■	■	■
Ducksfoot Lagoon	■	■	■	■
Websters Lagoon	■	■	■	■
Margooya Lagoon	■	■	■	■
Potterwalkagee Creek	□	■	■	■
Catfish Billabong	□	□	■	■

□ No water ■ Proposed water delivery

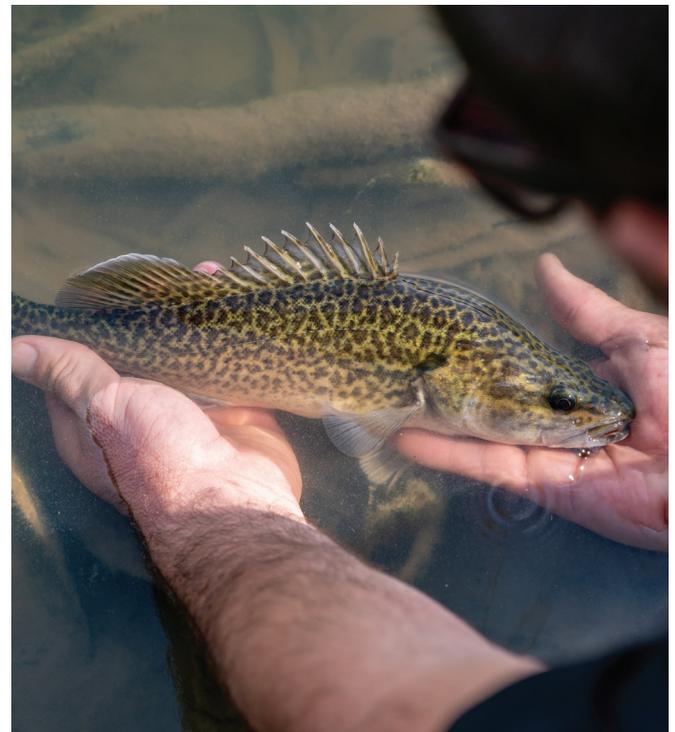


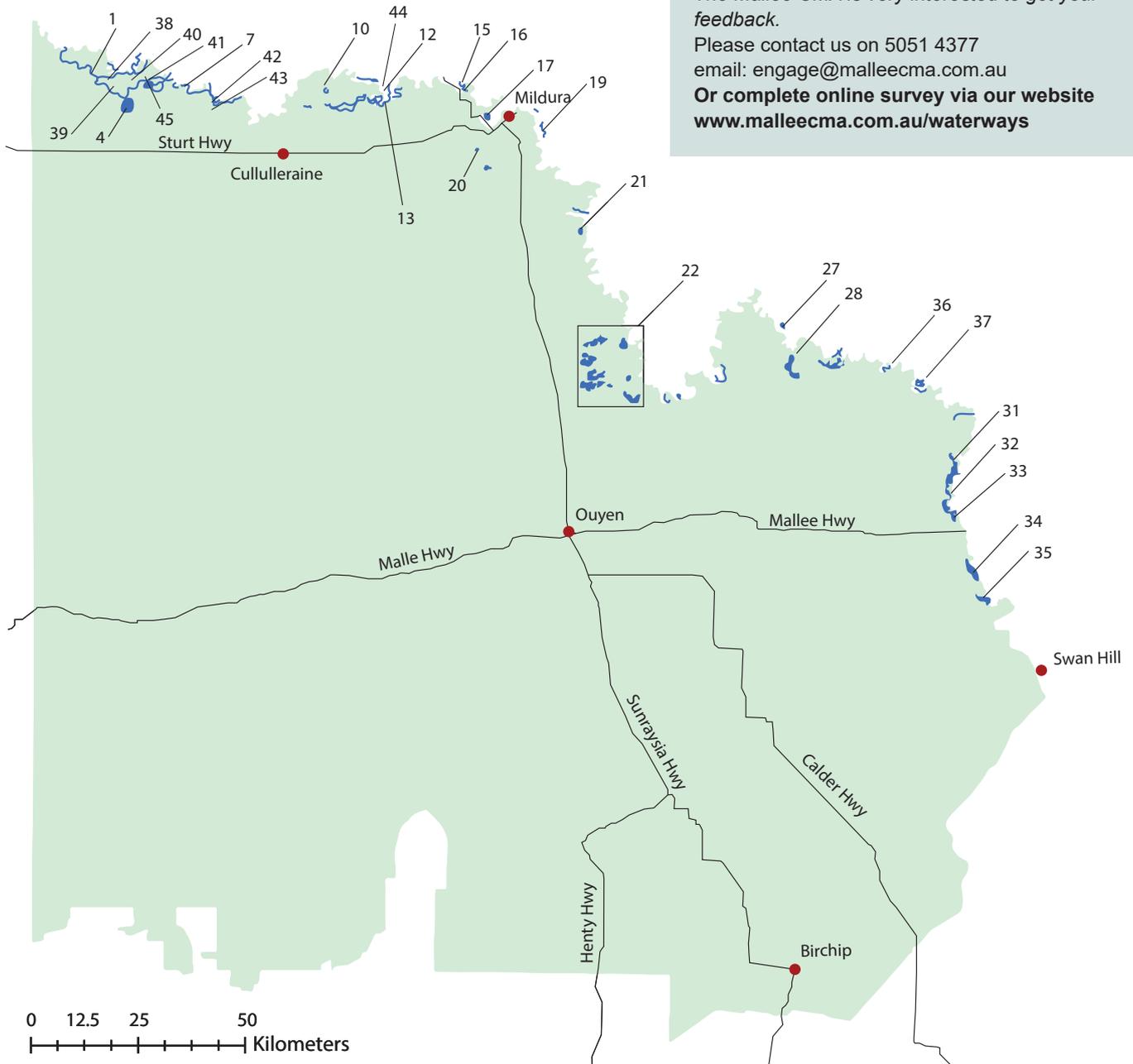
Figure 1: Wetlands and Floodplains of the Mallee.

Feedback

The Mallee CMA is very interested to get your feedback.

Please contact us on 5051 4377
email: engage@malleecma.com.au

Or complete online survey via our website
www.malleecma.com.au/waterways



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| 1. Lindsay River North | 20. Koorlong Lake | 37. Fishers Lagoon |
| 2. Websters Lagoon | 21. Bullock Swamp | 38. Scotties Lagoon |
| 4. Lake Wallawalla | 22. Hattah Lakes (minus Lake Kramen) | 39. Crankhandle |
| 7. Potterwalkagee Creek | 27. Margooya Lagoon | 40. Lindsay-Mullaroo Connector |
| 10. Robertson Wetland | 28. Lakes Powell and Carpul | 41. Stockyards |
| 12. Wallpolla Horseshoe | 31. Burra North | 42. Mulcra Horseshoe |
| 13. Robertson Creek | 32. Burra South | 43. Mulcra Floodplain Inundation |
| 15. Cowanna Billabong | 33. Burra South Proper | 44. Finnigans Creek |
| 16. Brickworks Billabong | 34. Nyah | 45. Mullaroo Creek |
| 17. Lake Hawthorn | 35. Vinifera | |
| 19. Butlers Creek & Ducksfoot Lagoon | 36. Bidgee Lagoon | |

Published March 2018

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Map: Proposed inundation extent for Spring 2021 Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes

