

Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland of International Importance



Young husband Peninsula, Coorong and Tavwitherie Barrage

The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Site is one of six South Australian sites listed as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Recovery Project aims to ensure that the environmental values that give the site its international significance are healthy, productive and resilient.

The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is an international treaty that aims to halt and reverse the loss of wetlands around the world. The treaty seeks to conserve the remaining wetlands through wise use and education regarding their value and importance.

The Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert was designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1985.

Wetlands can be designated as internationally important if they meet one or more of the nine criteria for listing. The Coorong and Lakes region currently meets eight of the nine criteria, including regularly supporting significant populations of waterbirds, conserving significant species or ecological communities, its fish diversity and a range of wetland types.

Ecological character

The ecological character of a Ramsar wetland is the combination of the ecosystem components (plants and animals), processes (i.e waterbird and fish breeding) and services or benefits (what humans take from the site) that comprise the site.

Under the Ramsar Convention, the Australian Government is expected to manage all Australian Ramsar sites to maintain their ecological character, to be aware of any changes to ecological character, and to notify the Ramsar Secretariat of any changes to ecological character.

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project is a key component of South Australia's \$610 million Murray Futures program, funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative.

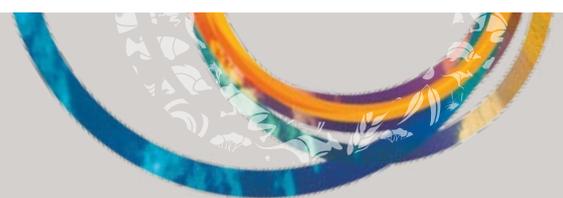
The CLLMM Recovery Project, is comprised of a suite of management actions that collectively aim to improve the ecological features of the CLLMM site to deliver a healthy, productive and resilient wetland of international importance, as well as to increase capacity, knowledge and understanding across communities. It is being delivered in collaboration with the community and Ngarrindjeri, the areas traditional owners.



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The ecological character of Australian Ramsar sites is protected from significant impacts under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In order to fulfill its obligations under the Ramsar Convention, the Australian Government works with State and Territory governments to manage Ramsar sites.

Updated ecological character description

The Ecological Character Description (ECD) of a wetland provides a baseline description of the site at a given point in time. It includes information about the site's environmental features and services and can be used to help develop management plans and design programs that monitor and detect changes in ecological character.

In 2006, the current ECD for the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Site was completed. It describes the site and includes limits of acceptable change.

The CLLMM Recovery Project will be updating the ECD to meet the Australian Government National Guidelines for describing the Ecological Character of Australian Ramsar wetlands, includes additional information that has been captured since 2006.

Site operations manual

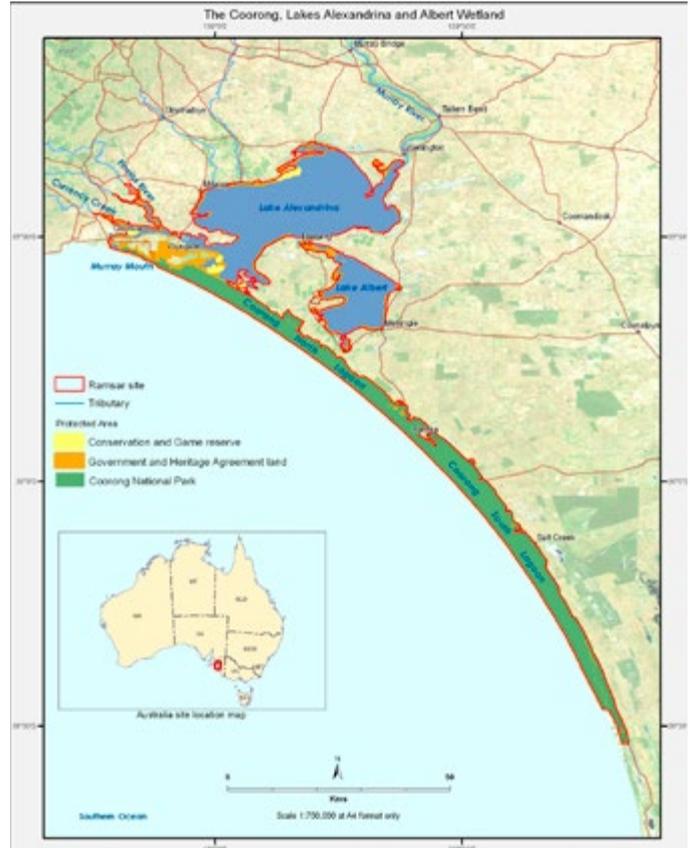
The CLLMM Recovery Project will also be developing a site operations manual to assist with the region's future management.

The site operations manual will provide guidance on how to manage the ecological character of the CLLMM site under state, national, and international obligations.

Ecosystem response forecasting tool

Human impacts can increase water shortages in aquatic ecosystems, affecting the hydrology, ecology and the benefits to humans that these ecosystems provide. The CLLMM Recovery Project is contributing to the development of an Ecosystem Response Forecasting Tool (ERFT), which integrates models of hydrodynamic, ecological structure, function and ecosystem services.

The ERFT will allow scenarios of possible future climate and management to be objectively compared. In doing so the tool will seek to include our understanding of the complex ecosystem interplay with management. It will enable the forecasting of response to climate and management scenarios, allowing both human and environmental benefits to be maximised.



Pelicans on the Coorong new fishing camp

Futher information

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