

# Coorong Partnership

Communique No. 6

18 September 2020



The sixth meeting of the [Coorong Partnership](#) was held on 18 September 2020 and included a site visit to the southern [Coorong National Park](#) and Coorong South Lagoon to view and discuss progress on a range of [Project Coorong](#) initiatives being undertaken in collaboration with First Nations and the broader community.

The Partnership was fortunate to be accompanied on the visit by the Minister for Environment and Water, David Speirs MP and Ngarrindjeri Elder, Uncle Derek Gollan.

The Minister for Environment and Water addressed the Coorong Partnership at Cantara Homestead and discussed the importance of Project Coorong to restore the health, vitality and visitor experience of the Coorong, not only through its environmental projects but through identifying and promoting nature-based tourism and economic development opportunities for the region. Historic Cantara Homestead was built in 1866 and sits at the base of large sand dunes protecting it from the Southern Ocean. [Limestone Coast Landscape Board](#) staff discussed the [Our Coorong | Our Coast](#) project, including the recent revegetation works on the dunes behind the homestead. The Partnership discussed the importance of removing corflute tree guards following revegetation programs and noted the opportunity to explore bio-degradable options that would break down naturally. Uncle Derek spoke to the group about growing up in and around the Coorong, his knowledge of the local area, his time as a ranger, and how he has seen the landscape change over his lifetime. The Partnership recognised the importance of passing on cultural knowledge to the next generation of rangers. The [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) (NPWS) agreed to extend a formal invitation to Uncle Derek to mentor Coorong National Park rangers.

The Partnership travelled to [42 Mile Crossing Campground](#), which is one of the Coorong National Park's most frequented campsites because it offers direct 4WD access to the Southern Ocean Beach. NPWS staff discussed recent facility upgrades including the re-introduction of fire pits at selected sites, as well as future opportunities to improve the visitor experience. The Partnership recognised that highlighting First Nations culture and history is of interest to park visitors and the NPWS will continue to work the Ngarrindjeri and First People of the South East on opportunities to incorporate First Nations language and cultural history into signage. The Minister for Environment and Water acknowledged the ongoing work of [Friends of the Coorong](#) volunteers through regular tree planting and clean up days, installing walking trails and supporting guided walks, partnering with school groups, and installing QR codes at points of interest in the park. The Partnership discussed the importance of promoting nature-based tourism opportunities as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. As more people are able to holiday within South Australia there will be an increase of visitors to the Coorong.

The Partnership visited the Salt Creek regulator and fishway where Department for Environment and Water (DEW) Drainage Operations staff discussed the history and development of the South East Drainage Network, the recently completed South East Flows Restoration Project, and current fishway operations. The Partnership acknowledged the importance of flows to the Coorong South Lagoon and noted that [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin](#) (HCHB) will investigate the potential benefits of further augmenting flows from the South East to the Coorong under the Coorong Infrastructure Investigations Project (CIIP).

The Partnership visited the former Coorong Wilderness Lodge site to see firsthand the cultural and nature based tourism opportunity of this location. The Partnership noted that there is currently a lack of commercial visitor accommodation in the Coorong National Park area and agreed that the former Coorong Wilderness Lodge site offers magnificent scenic views and birdlife – making it an ideal site for re-activation.

The Partnership closed out its tour with a visit to Parnka Point where DEW's HCHB staff provided an update on the Water Resource Optimisation Project's expansion of the Coorong water quality monitoring network. DEW HCHB staff thanked the Partnership for their involvement and advice throughout the recent CIIP infrastructure shortlisting process, and reiterated the commitment to further engage and consult with the community as detailed infrastructure investigations progress over the next 12-18 months.

The Minister for Environment and Water thanked the Partnership members and Uncle Derek for an informative day and their ongoing commitment to Project Coorong.

It is proposed that the next Coorong Partnership meeting be hosted by the Coorong District Council in early November 2020.

## Further Information

If you would like to receive regular updates about [Project Coorong](#) please email: [projectcoorong@sa.gov.au](mailto:projectcoorong@sa.gov.au)