

## Communiqué – Meeting 11

### The Living Murray Community Reference Group (CRG)

This communiqué provides an overview of the CRG's meeting on 29–30 April 2008 in Goolwa, South Australia. Items discussed at the meeting included:

- **Water recovery**

The CRG received an update on The Living Murray water recovery program, which has recovered 133 GL of its 500 GL environmental water target. In addition, projects to recover a further 396.4 GL are in various states of development or implementation. The Group was informed about several water recovery projects that will be considered by the Ministerial Council in May. The CRG suggested that improved communication would assist the community in understanding the different government water recovery programs.

- **Indigenous engagement**

An update was provided on progress achieved through The Living Murray Indigenous Partnerships Program. This includes the appointment of six Indigenous facilitators and the convening of two icon site Indigenous Working Groups to facilitate Indigenous input at the icon sites. Information on the Use and Occupancy Mapping project was also provided, including a pilot project recently undertaken at Barmah–Millewa Forest.

- **Environmental works and measures mid-term review**

A mid-term review of the Environmental Works and Measures Program (EWMP) is underway to assess the extent to which the program is meeting icon site environmental objectives, and the feasibility of the existing timelines and budget. The CRG received an update on the likely outcome of the mid-term review and how this review will inform a revised EWMP work plan for the next three years.

- **Barmah Choke Study**

The CRG is a key consultation group for the Barmah Choke Study and received an update on its progress and forthcoming community engagement activities. The investigations phase is currently underway, with a report due in May 2008 which will be reviewed by the CRG.

- **Environmental watering**

The CRG was updated on recent use of environmental water under The Living Murray Environmental Watering Plan. 16.96 GL of environmental water is available in 2007–08, of which 11.1GL has been used to date to prevent irreversible damage to the environment and water supplies, and to protect critical drought refuges.

- **Acid sulfate soils**

The CRG received an update on a number of key tasks that are being undertaken by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission relating to the emergency acid sulfate soils problem. This included measures to reduce or mitigate the risk of environmental damage to the Lower Lakes caused by acid sulfate soils; risk management strategies and future management options currently in development; and assessment of acid sulfate soils risk in wetlands in the Murray River system, Ramsar wetlands and other key environmental sites in the Murray-Darling Basin.

In addition, a comprehensive overview on the characteristics of acid sulfate soils was provided by the dinner speaker, Rob Fitzpatrick from CSIRO.

- **Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth icon site**

At its February 2008 meeting, the CRG expressed grave concern about the health of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth icon site. The Icon Site Manager, Judy Goode from the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board, was invited to provide an update on the status of this icon site. This was followed by a tour the next day.

## Icon site tour

As part of this meeting, the CRG participated in a field trip to see first-hand the health of Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth area. The visit included a field trip where they were joined by ten Murray-Darling Basin Community Advisory Committee members, along with local community members and agency staff.

They heard expert information from:

- Rob Fitzpatrick, a Chief Research Scientist at CSIRO in Adelaide, and expert on acid sulfate soils
- Jason Higham, SA Native Fish Strategy Coordinator
- Peter Lewis, SA Water, Manager of the Barrages
- Tom Campbell, SA Water - Murray Mouth dredging project
- Katie Robinson from SA Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (Lower Murray Infrastructure)
- Local Indigenous community members and cultural rangers
- Leslie Fisher, local irrigator
- Bill Paterson and Judy Goode from the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board
- Murray-Darling Basin Commission staff.

A highlight of the tour was a visit to the Aboriginal community at Raukkan, where the group heard from Tom Trevorrow, Chairman of Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee and George Trevorrow, Interim Chairman of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority about the impact of the drought and lack of water on their environment and people.

The next CRG meeting will include a joint meeting with the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations to further develop partnerships between these two community groups. This meeting will be held in Albury on 25-26 August 2008.

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The Living Murray program is a commitment by the Australian, New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian and ACT governments to improve the health of the River Murray through significant investments in regional communities.

The Living Murray Community Reference Group (CRG) was established to provide advice to the Murray-Darling Basin Community Advisory Committee on all aspects of The Living Murray's implementation. It includes representatives from the Indigenous community, irrigation sector, environmental groups, industry, local government and the business community. The Community Advisory Committee considers the CRG's advice and communicates it to The Living Murray Committee, the Commission and the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council.

## CRG Members

Lee O'Brien (Chair)  
Laurie Arthur  
Gordon Ball  
Kelvin Baxter  
Robert Black  
Merril Boyd  
Arlene Buchan  
Tricia Caswell  
John Grabbe  
Henry Jones  
Howard Jones  
Judi Lawler  
Phyllis Miller  
Sarah Moles  
Kevin McKinnon

Henty, NSW  
Moulamein, NSW  
Deniliquin, NSW  
Berrigan, NSW  
Coleambally, NSW  
Berrigan, NSW  
Melbourne, Vic  
Melbourne, Vic  
Dirranbandi, Qld  
Clayton, SA  
Dareton, NSW  
Moama, NSW  
Forbes, NSW  
Goomburra, Qld  
Tocumwal, NSW

Anne McCamish  
Doug McWilliam  
Kerri Muller  
Sarah Nicholas  
Paul Martin  
Barrie MacMillan  
Jack Papageorgiou  
Jeff Parish  
Russell Pell  
Matt Rigney  
Paul Sinclair  
Nola Taylor  
Col Thomson  
Dick Thompson  
David Wotton

Shepparton, Vic  
Griffith, NSW  
Strathalbyn, SA  
Wandiligong, Vic  
Renmark, SA  
Mildura, Vic  
Cooltong, SA  
Barmera, SA  
Kyabram, Vic  
Meningie, SA  
Melbourne, Vic  
Buronga, NSW  
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Griffith, NSW  
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