

Monitoring and outcomes



In 2006 a comprehensive monitoring program was established to track whether the ecological objectives of The Living Murray program were being achieved and how the condition of sites was changing over time.

Ecological objectives

Regulation of the River Murray significantly reduced natural floods and over time, this resulted in a drastic decline in ecological condition and river health.

As part of the First Step Decision to recover water and build works to get water back to key sites, specific ecological objectives and expected outcomes were described. For each icon site they were grouped under the themes of vegetation, waterbirds, fish and others (i.e. productivity and connectivity).

Since then, yearly monitoring has taken place at all icon sites to measure the outcomes from delivery of water for the environment and track condition.



What have we found?

Monitoring has shown that the environment has largely responded well to targeted watering. In 2007, in the midst of the Millenium Drought, all icon sites were either in fair ecological condition or in need of attention. Since then, the overall condition of the sites that have received water for the environment has followed a clear trajectory of improvement with most sites now in good or excellent condition. There is a lot that sits below the headline grades with some areas doing better than others.

While it is still early days towards achieving a healthy Murray River, the monitoring shows the critical role of water for the environment in helping achieve environmental outcomes.



20 years of The Living Murray
Much achieved, much to do

		Barmah Millewa Forest	Gunbower Forest	Koondrook- Perricoota Forest	Hattah Lakes	Lindsay Mulcra Wallpolla Islands	Chowilla	Lower Lakes Coorong Murray Mouth
	2022-2023	B	B	D	B	B	A	B
	2021-2022	B	A	D	A	B	B	B
	2020-2021	B	B	D	A	B	C	C
	2019-2020	B	B	D	A	B	C	C
	2018-2019	B	A	D	B	B	B	C
	2017-2018	A	B	D	A	B	B	C
	2016-2017	A	B	C	A	B	A	B
	2015-2016	B	B	D	A	B	C	C
	2014-2015	B	B	D	A	-	C	B
	2013-2014	C	B	D	B	C	B	B
	2012-2013	C	B	D	C	C	C	B
	2011-2012	C	C	D	B	B	C	B
	2010-2011	B	B	D	C	B	B	D
	2009-2010	C	C	D	D	D	B	D
	2008-2009	D	C	D	D	D	C	D
	2007-2008	D	D	D	D	D	-	D

Grades

- A Excellent**
Most (75-100%) of ecological objectives have been met
- B Good**
More than half (50-74%) of ecological objectives have been met
- C Fair**
Fewer than half (25-49%) of ecological objectives have been met
- D Needs attention**
Few (0-24%) of ecological objectives have been met
- Data not available**

- 8-17 ecological objectives per site
- Birds, fish, vegetation and other objectives
- 80-100 monitoring reports each year
- 16 years of data

Site with environmental works/years where works used.

- Dry Very wet
- Wet Moderate

Ecological objectives over time

Yearly monitoring has taken place at all icon sites since 2006-2007 to assess the relative condition of each site through measuring a series of environmental objectives. Objectives can be met, partially met or not met and this is tracked over time for vegetation, fish, waterbirds and other environmental functions. The ecological objectives vary between each of the icon sites.

