20 Years of The Living Murray

River Murray

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Much achieved, much to do

The River Murray is essentially the main artery, weaving through and linking the other icon sites. It is over 2,000 km long from Hume dam to the estuary and ocean and connects many floodplains and wetlands along the way. The river is highly regulated by dams, weirs and barrages.

Many First Nations have connection to the River Murray with distinct cultural boundaries, languages and cultural practices.

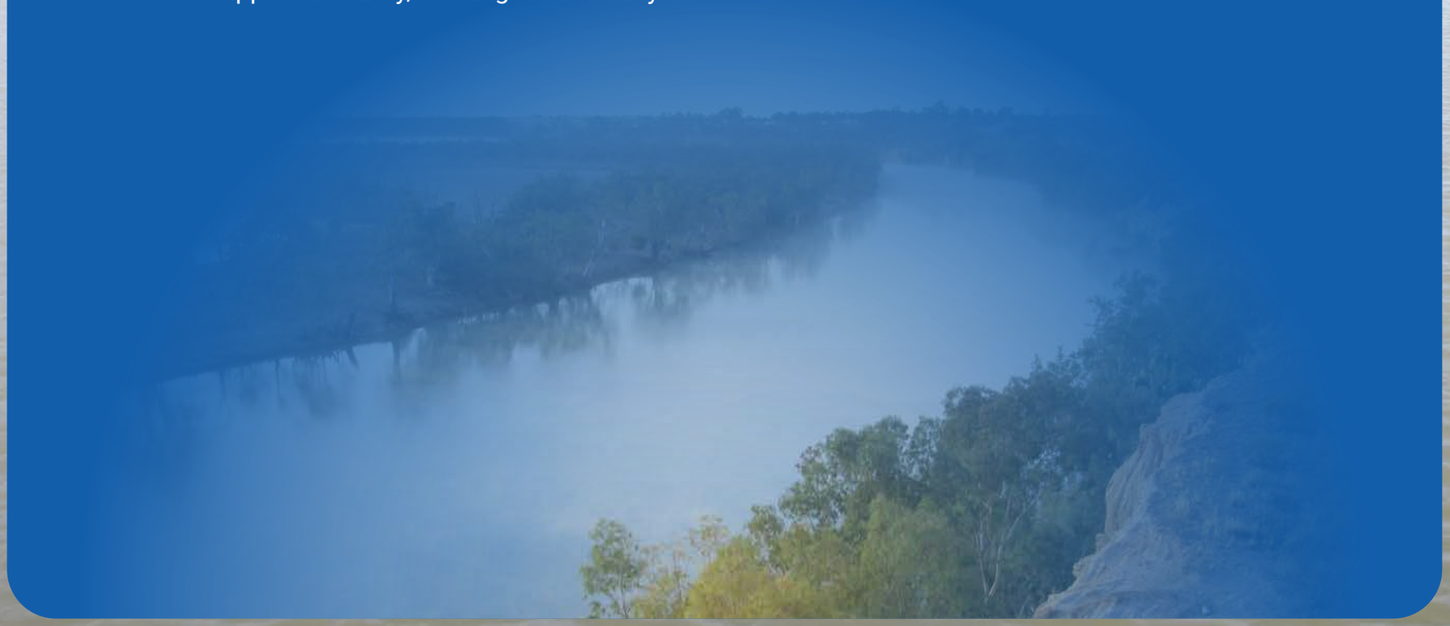
Monitoring the river that joins us

For a long time the River Murray did not have dedicated ecological monitoring as an icon site in its own right. This changed in spring 2019, when a consortium of scientists across NSW, Victoria and South Australia came together for a first trial of monitoring responses to water for the environment along the length of the Murray.

A five-year monitoring plan for the River Murray quickly followed in 2020, to learn from and improve the management and coordination of environmental flows at a system scale.

The River Murray monitoring plan builds on existing monitoring programs by filling in key location gaps and bringing the results from different projects together, like a jigsaw, to evaluate the whole river's response to flow.

Monitoring is just getting started, but reconnecting the Murray with its floodplains is already demonstrating clear outcomes to support a healthy, working River Murray.



Coordinated watering across the Southern Basin

Since 2018 environmental water holders have been working to deliver a coordinated spring flow across the Southern Basin. The multi-site event aims to connect the River Murray and its tributaries, from dams to the Murray Mouth, watering floodplains along the way.

In 2019, 330 GL of water for the environment was actively coordinated between the Goulburn and Murray Rivers benefiting over 2,500 km of rivers and creeks, as well as providing targeted water at key sites along the way, including 6 Ramsar listed wetlands of international significance.

By spring 2020, coordination between Murray and Goulburn had grown to include environmental flows from the Murrumbidgee River to provide an even bigger system-wide boost and improve connectivity all the way along the river down to the Coorong and Murray Mouth.

The River Murray multi-site has grown to be the largest environmental flow action coordinated across the Murray-Darling Basin. Volumes of water used for this event have grown to nearly 400 GL each year!

2010

The first trial of a multi-site environmental flow in the Murray, with water released from Hume Dam protected through to the Lower Lakes.

2018

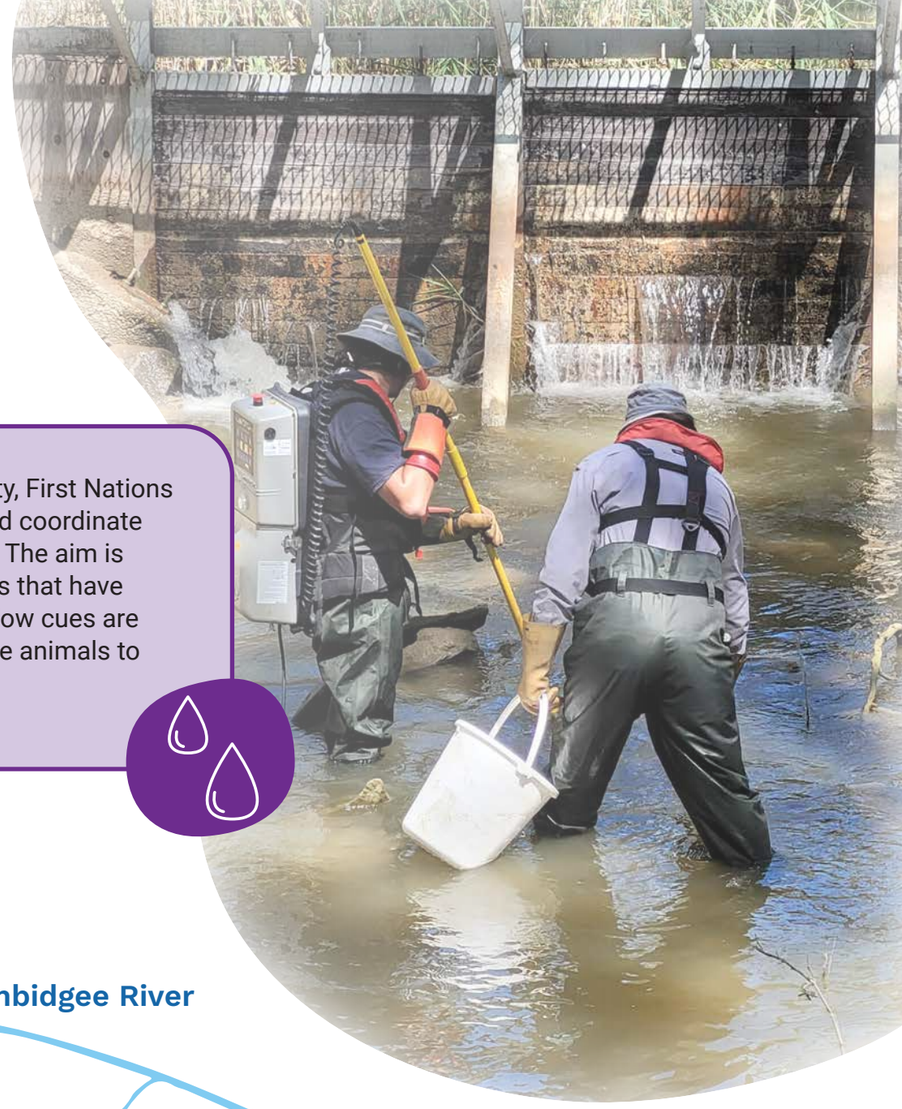
Environmental flows are now coordinated between Southern Basin rivers to create flow pulses along the length of the River Murray.

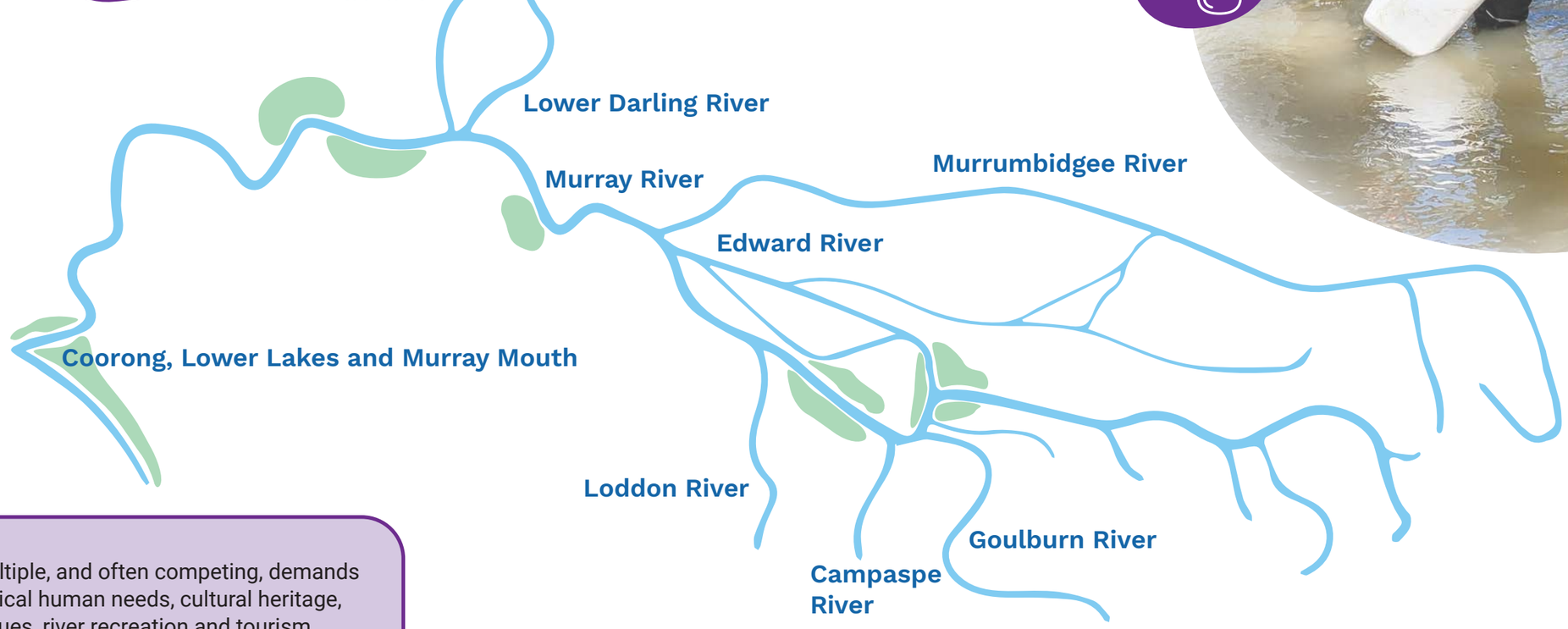
2020

Development a five-year monitoring plan for the River Murray.

The primary objective of the River Murray monitoring plan is to better understand ecological responses to flow and inform the coordination and adaptive management of water for the environment.

Environmental water managers, community, First Nations and ecologists work together to design and coordinate flows along the length of the River Murray. The aim is to reintroduce higher flows and flow pulses that have been lost through river regulation. These flow cues are important as they provide signals for native animals to feed, breed and move.





The River Murray serves multiple, and often competing, demands for water. These include critical human needs, cultural heritage, irrigation, environmental values, river recreation and tourism, hydro-power generation and flood mitigation.

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