Fact Sheet

Lindsay Island

Floodplain Restoration Project Overview

The Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP) is one of the largest coordinated environmental improvement programs currently being delivered along the Murray River.

The VMFRP would reconnect important floodplains to the Murray River by removing barriers to water flow and building carefully designed infrastructure to support the seasonal wetting cycles that native plants and animals depend on. It will improve the ecological health of up to 15,000 hectares of wetlands and flood-dependent forests.

The Lindsay Island project is the largest under the VMFRP and forms part of the significant Chowilla Floodplain site. It is located in Victoria, approximately 75 km north-west of Mildura and 30 km east of Renmark, South Australia.

The Lindsay Island Floodplain Restoration Project aims to restore more natural flooding patterns by improving how water moves onto, across and off the floodplain. Carefully designed infrastructure would allow water to spread further and stay longer when the river rises, and provide a timely top-up during dry periods, and when natural flooding isn't sufficient. The proposed works would complement the existing environmental infrastructure built under The Living Murray (TLM) program between 2006 and 2015.

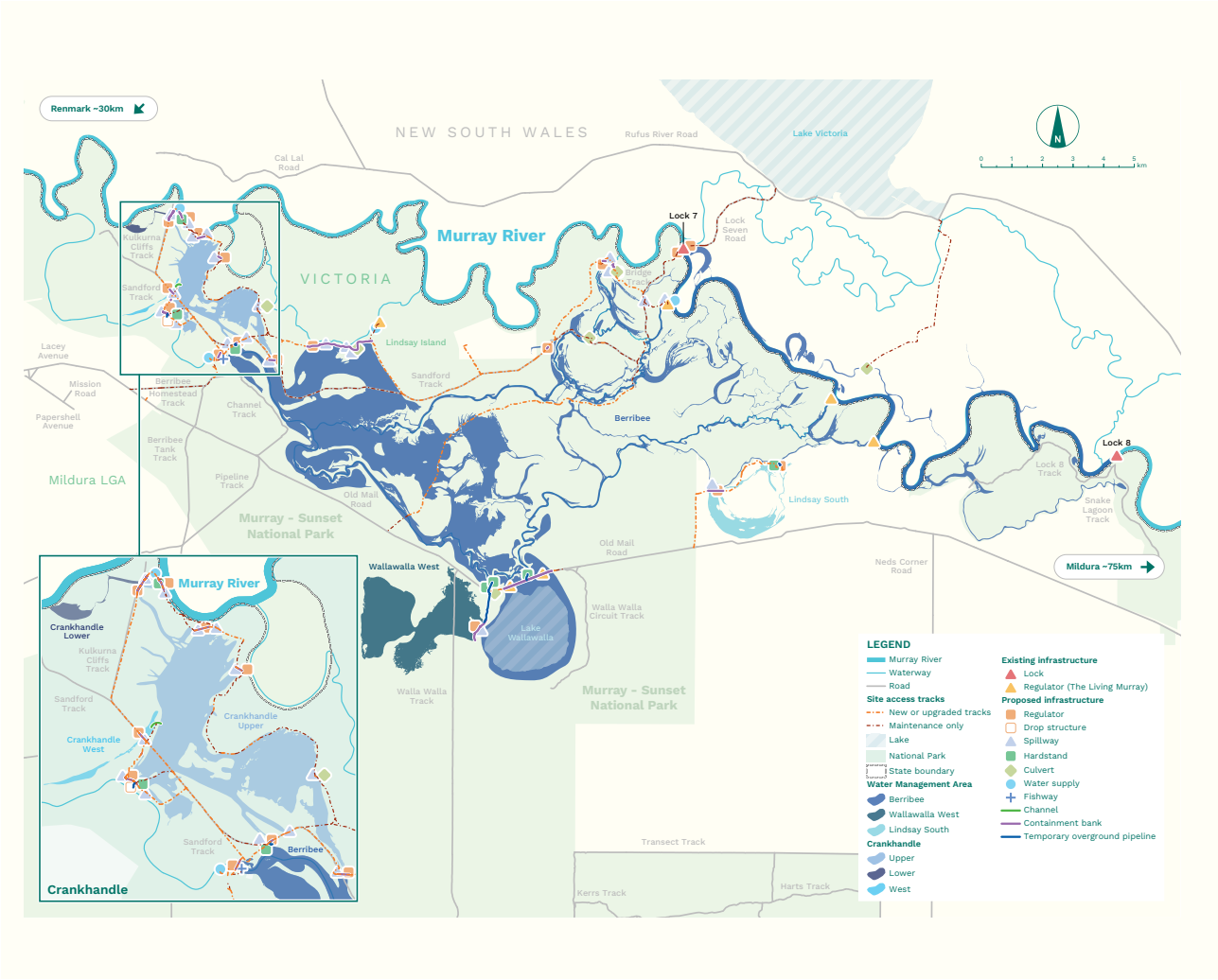
Restoring flooding at Lindsay Island will help regenerate river red gum forests, black box woodlands, lignum shrublands and wetlands. It will also improve habitat for native animals such as, frogs, waterbirds, reptiles and mammals, and protect cultural heritage values that depend on stable soils and healthy landscapes.

Lindsay Island is a place of deep cultural, spiritual and historical significance for Traditional Owners. Protecting cultural heritage and working closely with Traditional Owners is a key consideration in planning the project.

Project benefits

- Up to 5,931 hectares of floodplain across Victoria and NSW targeted for improved ecological health
- 149 rare or threatened species, such as the Growling Grass Frog and Regent Parrot, are predicted to benefit from improved habitat conditions
- The health of more than 36,000 large trees would improve
- Improved wetland habitat for waterbirds
- Increased tourism and recreational opportunities
- Employment opportunities during construction, and long-term employment in the tourism and recreation industries in Mildura from anticipated uplift in visitors

Map showing proposed environmental works at Lindsay Island



Proposed infrastructure

Most of the infrastructure would be located on Lindsay Island. Regulators, which act as gates, would also be built on the floodplain areas south of the Lindsay River, including near Lake Wallawalla. Careful design of the proposed infrastructure means environmental water can be delivered to suit the unique site conditions, the landscape and flora and fauna that live there. As much as possible, new infrastructure would be sited on areas that are already disturbed, such as existing access tracks. This helps to minimise ecological impacts during construction.

Water would be managed across the floodplain with new infrastructure including:

- 1 very large regulator including a fishway across the Lindsay River and downstream of Berribee Homestead, 2 large regulators and 15 small regulators
- Eleven culverts (a tunnel-like structure to help water flow under a road or track)
- Containment banks and spillways
- Five permanent hardstand areas for temporary pumps (to transfer environmental water and construction water from the Lindsay River or Lindsay South Creek as required during operation and construction)
- One temporary hardstand area for temporary pumps (to transfer construction water from the Murray River as required during construction)
- Five pipeline alignments for temporary pump infrastructure (for operation)
- One channel to assist with water flow
- One drop structure into the Lindsay River
- Upgrades to existing access tracks (around 60km) and new access tracks (6.5km).

Examples of proposed infrastructure

Very Large Regulator


Small Regulator


Channel


Drop Structure

Construction

If the Lindsay Island project is approved, construction is expected to take around 18 months to complete. No works or impacts would occur outside of the construction footprint. The construction footprint which is the area of land needed to build the projects, covers 105 hectares, and includes all infrastructure and associated construction activities, including laydown areas, site compounds, and workforce facilities, upgrades to site access and borrow sites. The project would prioritise avoiding and minimising impacts to the greatest extent possible.

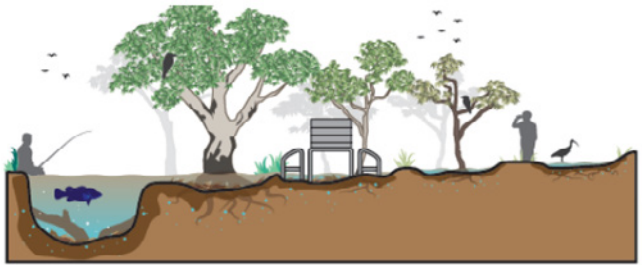
Before the start of any construction, detailed designs would be finalised and additional approvals and construction permits would be required. The community would be updated during the pre-construction period, and notified before the start of any works.

Construction impacts would be monitored before, during and after works. Areas disturbed during construction would be rehabilitated and long-term ecological monitoring would continue after construction is complete to track the recovery of the floodplain and inform future watering decisions.

Proposed operations

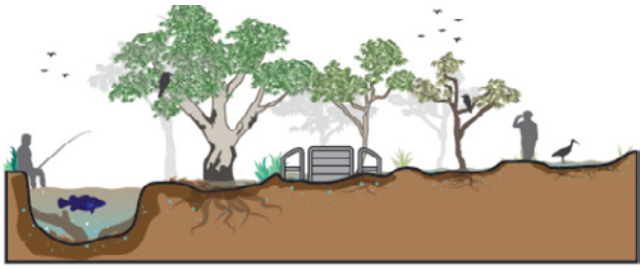
Water would be delivered through a combination of natural inflows, raising of the existing Lock 7 and by temporary pumping using environmental water during dry conditions. Different watering approaches would be used depending on river levels and floodplain condition. In some years, water may flow naturally onto the floodplain. In others, infrastructure would allow water to be held for longer or delivered to areas that would otherwise remain dry. This flexible approach allows the project to respond to changing conditions while using water efficiently.

Lock 7 controls the flow of water into Mullaroo Creek and the Lindsay River. When water needs to get to the higher reaches of the floodplain, Lock 7 weir can be raised and a new regulator, proposed to be built just downstream of Berribee Homestead would be opened. Even higher reaches of the floodplain can be watered using additional pumping. The works proposed for the Lindsay Island project would operate under three potential watering scenarios.



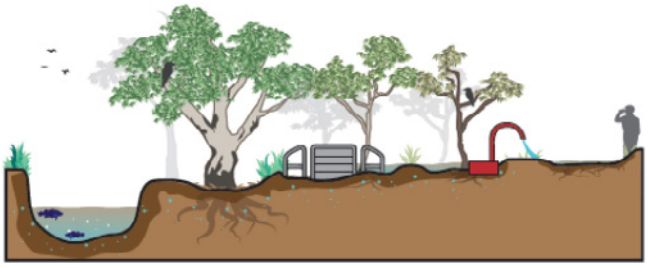
Scenario 1:

Infrequently, when the river is high and flowing into the forest, and the water stays on the floodplain for long enough, we would open the regulators and leave the water to flow naturally.



Scenario 2:

Often, when the river is high and flowing into the forest, but the flood won't last as long as it's needed, we would raise lock 7, shut the regulators and hold the water on the floodplain, before returning the water to the river.



Scenario 3:

If the floodplain and river levels aren't high enough for water to enter through the regulators, we could use a temporary pump to get environmental water onto the floodplain and close the regulators to hold the water there for as long as needed, before returning the water to the river.

Contact us

To learn more about the Lindsay Island Floodplain Restoration Project, visit the Lindsay Island Project page on the VMFRP website. The VMFRP team will continue to engage with the community, stakeholders and Traditional Owners across all stages of the development of VMFRP projects.

For more information please visit the VMFRP website or contact the team.

1800 808 830 **info@vmfrp.vic.gov.au** **www.vmfrp.com.au**

VMFRP is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by the Victorian Government, Lower Murray Water, Goulburn Murray Water, Mallee and North Central Catchment Management Authorities and Parks Victoria.