



Mid Murray Landcare SA

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Activity Update July 2026

If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke at the above email address, or view it on our webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding, primarily Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants.

Objectives - Support the Mid Murray Landcare committee to implement objectives of their strategic plan which align with the key objectives of Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board. Maintain strategic partnerships of the Landcare community keeping partners informed of activities and opportunities in the region including the Mid Murray Council, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, local community, volunteers and land managers.

- 1. Activities – Support the Mid Murray Landcare Committee meetings, annual general meeting, and monthly activity updates, host and support five websites. Encourage the participation of land managers in activities like habitat box surveys, turtle nest monitoring, bat monitoring, workshops, conferences and other events.**
 - 1.1 We held our monthly Landcare Meeting at the Cambrai Council Chambers. Our upcoming AGM was planned and advertised in the Leader Newspaper, via email contacts and social media. Websites continue to be hosted and updated as required, added a YouTube link to our channel from the Landcare page. Also updated the Meldanda brochure on the website.
 - 1.2 Chairperson Chris and Aimee started reviewing and updating the strategic plan with a focus on addressing the ecological decline of the Marne North Rhine Saunders Catchment.
 - 1.3 Aimee applied for a \$5,000 Eucalyptus Grant to support two identification workshops with botanist Dean Nicolle and conserve rare *Eucalyptus behriana* species.
 - 1.4 Prepared and submitted Grassroots Grant Final Report for 2025-2026. Supported landholders with Grassroots Grant final reporting 'Turtle Nest Protection' and HELP - 'Help Erosion and Landslip Prevention' projects.

Habitat Box Surveys

- 1.5 Lou, from Brown's Well has had several Western Pygmy Possum boxes on his property since 2019, he checked them this month and found two microbats in one box and a nest in another. Not sure what the nest is from, but he has set up a camera to find out.
- 1.6 Site visit to John's property east of Robertstown, has had three WPP boxes installed since 2021, one box had some scats in there, appear too large to be a Western Pygmy Possum and a gecko missing a tail in another box.

- 1.7 WPP Box number 339 has been set up by Grant near Sleeper Track on Heritage property.
- 1.8 Site visit to Robyn's property in Sutherland, she has one possum box that was installed in 2019 on a very isolated patch of mallee, the box had nesting material in there, including leaves, sticks, grass and seeds.



Photo 5 Scats Robertstown box



Photo 6 Nesting material Sutherlands box



Photo 7 Gecko Robertstown box.

Objectives - Provide opportunities at Mid Murray Landcare SA Nursery for volunteers to participate in hands on activities to grow and provide plants to land managers, schools, community groups and other projects to support healthy natural landscapes by supporting revegetation projects and increasing future native seed availability.

2. Activities - Provide opportunities at the Mid Murray Landcare SA nursery for volunteers to participate in activities to support on ground projects throughout the Mid Murray region. Support land managers, groups or schools with on ground project activities including site visits, plant identification, project design and implementation.

- 2.1 Mid Murray Landcare Nursery provided weekly opportunities for volunteers to support the production of native plants for projects in the region, including cuttings of *Myoporum* sp., *Rhagodia* sp., *Olearia* sp., *Eremophila* sp. and *Correa* sp., sowing seed of *Vittadinia* sp. and *Callitris* sp. and potting on *Minuria* sp., *Hardenbergia* sp., *Kennedia* sp. and *Acacia* sp.
- 2.2 We supported twenty-two landholders or groups with native plants, plant identification or other projects including two site visits to support revegetation, final filming with Sophie Thomson and her docuseries and plants to support the endangered Plains Wanderer at Monarto Safari Park.



Photos 1-4 from social media post about the native grass seed collected from Meldanda's Seed Production area by volunteers, propagated by YEL students at the Landcare Nursery, grown and bought for Monarto Safari Park's breeding aviaries housing the endangered Plains Wanderer.

Objective - Support the management of Meldanda on behalf of the Cambrai Primary School Governing Council and provide opportunities for volunteers and youth to increase their knowledge, participation and leadership in landscape management by supporting educational conservation initiatives.

3. Activities - Provide support for volunteer participation in activities at Meldanda to further develop and maintain seed production gardens and continue its development as an outdoor educational site, dark sky location and camping facility.

- 3.1 Landcare volunteers participated in weeding and cleaning the seed production areas, ready for new seed to be produced.
- 3.2 We have worked with the Cambrai Primary School and School Governing Council to progress the improvement of the wastewater system at Meldanda.
- 3.3 Chris O'Keefe from Cambrai PS slashed the Astronomy Paddock at Meldanda, the task was too much for the ride-on mower, thanks Chris.
- 3.4 Don Bursil donated solar panels and batteries to Meldanda, thanks Don.
- 3.5 Don Lester and Peter Smith repaired habitat boxes at Meldanda on Bat Island, they still have more to do, thanks Don and Peter.
- 3.6 New campground signs were installed by our volunteers Cameron and Sheralee who have also been busy with day-to-day maintenance and improvement of the site including spraying weeds, burying irrigation line and mowing.
- 3.7 Supported the Landcare volunteers to spend the day weeding at Meldanda, we focused on some entrance points near the Butterfly and Community Bushgarden, there is lots of natural recruitment of *Hardenbergia violacea* and *Acacia sp.*
- 3.8 Meldanda campsite for July there has been people camping for twenty-two camp nights, twelve children, thirty-nine adults with four astronomy campers.



Photo 8 Chris O'Keefe Slashed paddock.

Activities - Support Cambrai Primary School and other groups with the engagement of youth in outdoor and environmental activities at Meldanda.

- 3.9 Hon. Emily Bourke - Labor MLC, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Murraylands and Riverland region visit at Meldanda with Cambrai Primary School students. We had the opportunity to share how special Meldanda was, and the students enjoyed showing Emily their cubbies along the Marne.

- 3.10 Visit to Cambrai Primary School for their first assembly of the term, shared some unique information on their Kanyini focus plants and we walked around Cambrai to discover where they were.
- 3.11 Supported Keyneton Primary School National Tree Day planting event in partnership with Keyneton Community Association, we planted ninety-five native plants on the steep bank out the front of the school to increase aesthetics and encourage birds and pollinators.
- 3.12 Posted laminated Meldanda and our River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve brochures to ASSA member to use for promotion at the upcoming Science Alive Event in Adelaide which attracts over 10,000 people, there will also be QR Codes to help direct people to the respective websites.



Photos 9 Cambrai PS Kanyini Plant exploration. Photo 10. Keyneton PS National Tree Planting. Photo 11 Meldanda Hon Minister Bourke.

Purpose - Build and maintain strategic partnerships with, and between, stakeholders for mutually beneficial outcomes of the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve. Support the Dark Sky Committee, Mid Murray Council, volunteers and stakeholders to maintain the internationally recognised dark sky accreditation, promote the importance of "Skycare" and the value of protecting the circadian rhythms of nocturnal species and preserving a natural resource that is disappearing globally: darkness.

- 4. Activities - Support the community to preserve and manage the dark sky habitat, by providing resources, information and opportunities for the community and volunteers to participate in this habitat protection, identifying suitable measurement sites for monitoring equipment, engaging with landholders willing to host the equipment, setting up and calibrating the equipment and teaching landholders how to download the results.**

Chris Tugwell

- 4.1 Updated Fact Sheet to 'Ten Top Dark Sky Facts'. Responded to query re Council approval for Dark Sky businesses. Query re article for SA Life magazine. Possible telescope donation from Adriaan Sakko (former Mid Murray Councillor). Site visits to choose location for new SQM (Kate, Andrew, Ken, David). Meeting to discuss old Council Section 41 committee (CT, Don, Leila). Public bookings open for Swan Reach Observatory.

Kate Wills

Social media

- 4.2 Reached 55k views this month (down from last month's peak of 120k). The "Simple Steps for Dark Sky Preservation" theme remains an essential topic to regularly highlight, though reach naturally spikes higher during and around major public events.

Project NightWatch (SQM Project)

- 4.3 Coordinating closely with Andrew, David, and Ken. We shortlisted four properties (from eleven registrations) and visited all four, meeting on-site with two of the landholders. It was wonderful to connect with such enthusiastic community members—it is going to be a tough decision! The team is close to finalising the SQM build, and I have made contact with the Swan Reach Men's Shed to assist with constructing the frame/stand. Exciting!

Media

- 4.4 Channel 10 live weather cross from the RMIDSR/observatory and interview for the Dark Sky Reserve feature. The team from channel 10 and South Australian Tourism Commission had a blast in the Mid Murray and the RMIDSR, and they were very keen to highlight our unique regional offering.

Tourism

- 4.5 Kate has been working with the Swan Reach Observatory with their marketing and outreach and there is great interest in the reserve! Over 95% of the 115 ticket holders across the 6 sessions (Aug and Sept) are travelling from Adelaide metro and outer regions, this represents a significant tourism opportunity.



Images 1 and 2 from River Murray Dark Sky Reserve Facebook page supporting light pollution awareness.