

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Goolwa, Australia] - **Local Research Centre Champions Collaborative Approach to Tackle Climate Challenges in Coorong, Lower Lakes, and Murray Mouth Region**

The Coorong, Lower Lakes, and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Research Centre is taking a collaborative approach to tackle the pressing climate challenges affecting the region. Climate change is placing significant pressure on the region's delicate ecosystems with reducing river inflows, rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, more frequent and extreme climatic events, and habitat loss threatening biodiversity, ecosystems, and local communities.

To ensure that research reflects the perspectives of both community and First Nations people along with management agencies, the CLLMM Research Centre has established the Research Centre Advisory Forum (RCAF). This forum brings together stakeholders from various sectors including representatives from Commonwealth, state, and local government, local councils, Landscape Boards, First Nations representatives, and community members to guide and oversee the Centre's research program.

The CLLMM RCAF has played a crucial role in fostering constructive dialogues, particularly in prioritising research topics in the Research Centre. Following the engagement of over 300 individuals from 50 organisations across the region, topics were collated and discussed amongst RCAF members. These discussions were vital in shaping research priorities and fostering a comprehensive understanding of climate change impacts.

Dr. Nick Whiterod, Science Program Manager of the CLLMM Research Centre, emphasised the commitment to the collaborative research initiative that prioritise community and First Nations voices. Through the efforts of the RCAF, the Centre aims to effectively address climate change challenges while integrating local perspectives and indigenous knowledge.

Under the guidance of the RCAF, the CLLMM Research Centre has identified priority research topics across four research themes: Climate Adaptation and Ecosystem Services, Climate Mitigation, Threatened Species and Biodiversity. These priorities will inform the development and delivery of a comprehensive portfolio of research projects, that will tackle critical aspects of the impact of, and necessary responses to, climate change across the region. The Research Centre is also initiating research projects that address First Nations priorities along with those that help to share knowledge and building capacity in the community.

Nathan Hartman, First Nations Engagement Officer, emphasised the importance of First Nations community member participation in shaping regional research priorities and integrating Indigenous knowledge. The research priorities of the First Nations people of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) region reflect their deep spiritual connection to the land and waters in ways that may not be readily apparent to the broader audiences. First Nations culture and traditions are rooted within an ancient historical connection with country and countless generations of studying their local environment as a way of life. First Nations traditional ways of life, including water management, revegetation, and the conservation of local species can provide vital perspectives into the ways we manage the lands and waters into the future.

Local Goolwa resident Deidre Nieuwenhuis, a passionate member of the CLLMM Research Centre RCAF, highlighted the value of collaboration and knowledge exchange in setting the research priorities and addressing climate change impacts in the region. She highlighted the importance of communication and the diverse perspectives presented within the forum, underscoring the synergy between scientific research and cultural wisdom.

Following the recent prioritisation process by the RCAF, nine priority research topics along with flagship projects focusing on estuarine connectivity, climate adaptation, ecosystem services and carbon capture potential of the region. Other priorities identified include examining the socio-economic impacts of cumulative droughts and floods, optimizing water management in the CLLMM Region, assessing the benefits and risks of landscape revegetation, synthesising knowledge on drought ecology and recovery, investigating coastal dune migration and protection, studying ocean beach ecology and threats, conserving small-bodied threatened fish (such as the locally extinct Yarra pygmy perch), waterbirds, and monitoring floodplain mussel/Lokeri populations. Researchers interested in these areas will collaborate with CLLMM Research Centre staff to develop project ideas under the guidance of the RCAF. The RCAF will continue to provide oversight and direction for the research program going forward.

The CLLMM Research Centre extends its appreciation to all participants for their valuable contributions to the RCAF's endeavours. This initiative underscores the Centre's dedication to fostering inclusive and impactful research efforts in combating climate change in the region.

Updates on research projects will be available on the CLLMM Research Centre's website, Facebook page, and through the Centre's newsletter, ensuring stakeholders remain informed and engaged in the ongoing research efforts.

<https://www.clmmresearchcentre.org/research-projects>

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The Goyder Institute for Water Research Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Research Centre, based in Goolwa SA, was established in 2023 through funding by the Australian Government.

Additional information:

The Goyder Institute for Water Research is a collaborative partnership of the South Australian Government through the Department for Environment and Water, CSIRO, Flinders University, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. The Institute facilitates governments, industries, communities and leading researchers to collaboratively identify, develop and adopt innovative solutions for complex water management challenges to ensure a sustainable future.



IMAGES



CLMM RCAF Meeting – RCAF members



Coorong National Park





Great Egret

