

Ngarrindjeri partnerships



Ngarrindjeri Ruwe contracting staff review Lakefront Habitat restoration project plans © 2011

The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project aims to support the active, long-term participation of Ngarrindjeri people, the traditional owners of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth area, in the management of the region's natural resources and cultural heritage.

The importance of Ngarrindjeri partnerships

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) region and surrounding areas are the homelands of the Ngarrindjeri people, who have a deep connection with the area, both spiritually and physically.

The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships project establishes the foundations for the long-term participation in the management of the CLLMM region.

The partnership with the CLLMM Recovery Project will help the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) achieve its aim of active and long-term participation by Ngarrindjeri people in natural resource and cultural heritage management.

The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project works across the CLLMM Recovery Project and supports core capacity in the NRA to ensure traditional knowledge, skills and cultural values are preserved and appropriately incorporated into the management of the CLLMM region.

The CLLMM Recovery Project supports Ngarrindjeri participation in aspects of environmental governance in the region, protection and management of Ngarrindjeri cultural values of the area, and provides funding for Ngarrindjeri training and involvement in on-ground activities.

The project was developed with the NRA and is designed to implement the objectives of the Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe (Sea Country Plan) 2006

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project is a key component of South Australia's \$610 million Murray Futures program, funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative.

The CLLMM Recovery Project, is comprised of a suite of management actions that collectively aim to improve the ecological features of the CLLMM site to deliver a healthy, productive and resilient wetland of international importance, as well as to increase capacity, knowledge and understanding across communities. It is being delivered in collaboration with the community and Ngarrindjeri, the areas traditional owners.



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Who is involved in this partnership?

The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority

The NRA formed in 2007 is the overarching authority for the Ngarrindjeri Nation, and is governed by elected community representatives and the Chairperson of each of the following Ngarrinjeri groups and organisations:

- Ngarrindjeri Tendi Inc.
- Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee Inc.
- Ngarrindjeri Title Management Committee
- Tangglun Piltengi Yunti Aboriginal Corporation
- Kalparrin Community Inc
- Lower Murray Nungas Club Inc
- Darpung Talkinyeri
- Raukkan Community Council
- Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc
- Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association Inc.
- Ninkowar Inc.
- Tumake Yande

Linking with the natural resource management (NRM) regions.

The NRA is developing long-term partnerships with South Australia's natural resource management (NRM) regions through the establishment of specific working groups.

These groups seek to build the KNYA and NRA interests into regional NRM strategies and business plans.

This work to secure long-term support for the Ngarrindjeri beyond the CLLMM Recovery Project is a key aspect of the Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project.

The project also complements existing Commonwealth Government programs operating in the Ngarrindjeri nation, including the Working on Country, Indigenous Heritage and Indigenous Culture Support programs.

What is the partnership doing?

This partnership promotes Ngarrindjeri participation across the CLLMM region through a range of activities.

Ngarrindjeri participation in governance and management through:

- the development and implementation of policies and procedures which enable working relationships between the NRA and all levels of government
- delivery of on-ground works by Ngarrindjeri
- the application of Ngarrindjeri cultural and ecological knowledge through management plans, and the development of protocols and cultural knowledge transmission programs.



Raymond Rigney at NRA's Murray Bridge Nursery © 2011

Managing and protecting Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal heritage through

- heritage assessments and heritage surveys
- providing heritage and cultural awareness training for CLLMM Recovery Project service providers
- cultural knowledge transmission from the Elders to the young.

Building the capacity of Ngarrindjeri to participate in the CLLMM management through

- the development and delivery of relevant training programs for Ngarrindjeri community members and NRA staff for the restoration and rehabilitation of lands and waters of the region
- supporting Ngarrindjeri involvement and employment in natural resource management in the CLLMM site
- supporting the work of the NRA Board to ensure professional engagement with government and the community.

Long-term participation in natural resource and cultural heritage management will continue to be facilitated through strong partnerships.

Case study – Listening to Ngarrindjeri speaking

In 2009, the South Australian Government and the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) signed the Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (KNYA). The KNYA, or “listening to Ngarrindjeri people speaking”, established a consultation and negotiation framework between the South Australian Government and the NRA.

Under the agreement, the government commits to support the participation of Ngarrindjeri in natural and cultural resource management in the Ngarrindjeri and Others Native Title claim area. It is also a key driver to supporting Ngarrindjeri engagement in the CLLMM Recovery Project.

In 2012, a five-year service agreement between the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and the NRA was reached which enables the Ngarrindjeri to support the delivery of the CLLMM Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project.

The NRA leads the delivery of this project, and has established the Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe (NYR) Program Group to oversee project management and to support the partnership in natural and cultural resource management. The project builds the core capacity of the NRA to better engage in caring after country.



Major Sumner welcoming visitors to Ngarrindjeri Country © 2012



Ngarrindjeri graduation ceremony Warrangie Farm © 2012

The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project supports Ngarrindjeri engagement in on-ground activities for the CLLMM Recovery Project, including heritage assessments, ecological monitoring, reed translocation for the Meningie Wetland Project, and sediment collection for the Ruppia Translocation project.

The partnership and the involvement in the CLLMM Recovery Project will help to preserve and promote the culture of the Ngarrindjeri people.

Achievements and innovations

The achievements and innovations of the Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project include:

- The development of statements of commitments (SOCs) to frame Ngarrindjeri engagement and input into the CLLMM Recovery Project. These statements establish engagement principles, clarify interests, and identify a set of joint and agreed initiatives and activities.
- A statement of commitment for the CLLMM Monitoring and Adaptive Management Framework Project and the CLLMM Vegetation Program. Respective working groups have been meeting on a monthly basis to implement and review the SOC's, and to support other joint on-ground activities.
- Since it began on 1 July 2011, the Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project has supported and promoted the NRA's participation in natural resource and cultural heritage management through strategic planning, training, and capacity building.
- The NRA is developing a Training and Employment Pathways Plan. The plan establishes a training framework aiming to build the skill and capacity of the NRA and the broader Ngarrindjeri community.
- The Ngarrindjeri Partnerships project has supported the employment of three Ngarrindjeri Rangers under the Working on Country program.
- Agreement of a cultural knowledge protection clause that supports appropriate integration of Ngarrindjeri cultural values into CLLMM management actions.
- Delivery of a water workshop on 14 February 2013 by NRA, State and Commonwealth water planners to discuss ways of accommodating Ngarrindjeri interests into water planning and policy.



Forging the path for new partnerships

The landmark funding agreement between the South Australian Government and the NRA for delivery of the Ngarrindjeri Partnerships Project has forged a path for new partnerships with Traditional Owners.

On 15 February 2013, the South Australian Government entered into a partnership agreement with the NRA for engagement in the Riverine Recovery Project.

As part of this partnership DEWNR will out post a wetland specialist to work with the NRA.

The Riverine Recovery Project (RRP) – which aims to improve the health of the Murray and the resilience of its wetlands and floodplains from the border to Wellington – is also part of the South Australian Government’s Murray Futures program, which is funded through the Australian Government’s Water for the Future initiative.

RRP will also be developing new relationships and funding arrangements with traditional owners and interested Aboriginal people in the Riverland to support their participation in the delivery of this program.



Joint DEWNR and NRA revegetation assessment © 2012

Futher information

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