

# River Murray: floodplain trees



## Tree condition index

South Australia's

Environmental trend and condition report card 2018

STATEWIDE



Trend  
**Stable**



Condition  
**Fair**



Reliability  
**Very good**

### Trend

#### The condition of River Murray floodplain trees is stable.

River red gum, black box and river cooba are three iconic species of floodplain tree along the River Murray in South Australia.

With reduced flows onto the river floodplain, and permanent flooding in other areas, the health of floodplain trees has been severely affected. Since 2006, the trend in condition of floodplain trees has been stable, but there are signs of continued decline (top figure).

In general, overbank flows and environmental water are beneficial to floodplain trees.

The future health of trees along the full extent of the River Murray in South Australia is dependent on improving the volume, timing and frequency of environmental watering.

### Condition

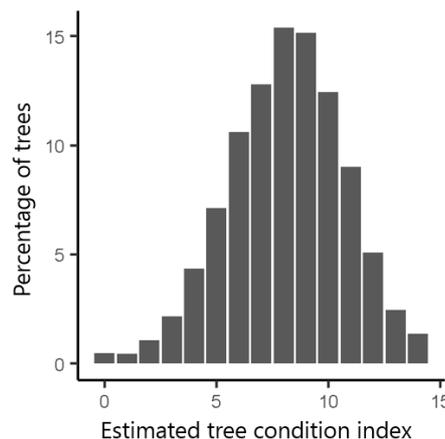
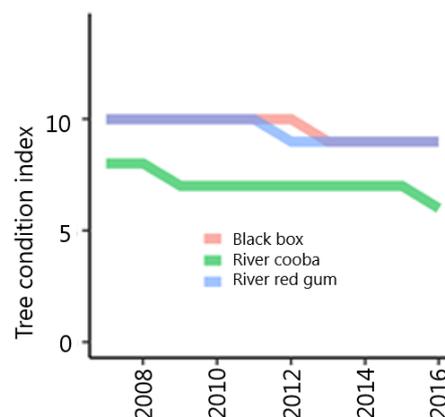
#### River Murray floodplain trees are in fair condition or better.

The health of floodplain trees across the South Australian River Murray floodplain was determined using a standardised tree condition index (TCI).

A TCI above 10 suggests a tree is in good health. A TCI of 4–9 suggests a tree is in fair condition and likely to respond to environmental water.

The condition of individual trees varies, ranging from poor condition to good condition (bottom figure). On average tree condition is considered fair or better.

**The condition of river red gum and black box is generally stable, but river cooba shows signs of declining condition**



### Why are River Murray floodplain trees important?

River red gum, black box and river cooba are important because they support ecological food webs and provide important habitat for diverse species of birds, reptiles, bats, insects and amphibians.

Floodplain trees are also an important part of the aesthetic and cultural landscape.

### What are the pressures?

Regulation of the River Murray, combined with river operations arrangements to support irrigation, town water supply and navigation, have significantly altered the patterns of flow in the river and the connections between the river and its wetlands and floodplains.

Some areas of the floodplain are now permanently wet, while others do not get wet as often as they used to. This change has severely affected the ecology and health of River Murray floodplain trees.

### What is being done?

Managed overbank flows, using water for the environment, are being implemented under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan to support the health of floodplain trees.

Engineering works, such as regulators and pumps on wetlands and the floodplain, are also being used to deliver more water to floodplain trees.

The recovery of floodplain trees is supported by the Basin Plan and the *River Murray Act 2003*.

For further information see: [technical information](#)



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