

Minister Ian Hunter

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
Minister for Water and the River Murray
Minister for Climate Change

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30th anniversary of Ramsar listing for Coorong and Lower Lakes

Water and the River Murray Minister Ian Hunter today joined celebrations marking 30 years since the listing of the Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert wetland as a Ramsar wetland of international significance.

“There is much to celebrate today – alongside the 30th anniversary, we also marked five years of continuous flows to the Coorong, made possible with environmental flows at the end of the Millennium drought, and the opening of the Boundary Creek Fishway,” he said.

“These are noteworthy milestones that show the progress we have made in helping return this beautiful region to health following the drought.

“State and Australian Governments and the local community have all been vital in restoring the region and building its resilience, however its future is dependent on environmental water.

“This is one of the many reasons why the State Government is calling for the Murray Darling Basin Plan to be implemented on time and in full.

“The delivery of environmental water under *The Living Murray Initiative* has been essential to maintaining freshwater releases to the Coorong, and these flows are critical to supporting the ongoing recovery of native fish, waterbirds, vegetation and maintaining the site’s ecology and international importance.

“We must continue to highlight the importance of continued, careful management by South Australia to make the most efficient use of environmental water.”

The Boundary Creek fishway is the first of several new barrage fishways, with others planned for the Ewe Island, Goolwa and Mundoo Island barrages.

The fishway has been completed in collaboration with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and SA Water, and supported by RecFish SA.

Minister Hunter said some great outcomes for the region were starting to be realised.

“But we still have more work to do to sustain the Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert wetland as a Ramsar site, as well as supporting its role in recreation, tourism, agriculture and fishing, and as an area central to Aboriginal culture and spiritual beliefs,” he said.

Fast facts

- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) was signed in Ramsar, Iran on 2 February 1971
- The Ramsar Convention aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain
- The Convention encourages member countries to nominate sites containing representative, rare or unique wetlands, or that are important for conserving biological diversity, to the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)
- The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert wetland was listed under the Ramsar Convention in 1985, and has a total surface area of 242,500 hectares.
- Number of Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention: 169
- Number of Ramsar Sites worldwide: 2,218
- Total surface area of designated sites: 214,131,110 hectares
- Australia was one of the first countries to become a Contracting Party to the Convention and designated the world's first Ramsar site, Cobourg Peninsula, in 1974
- Australia's 65 Ramsar sites cover more than 8.3 million hectares, forming an impressive estate of diverse wetland types; freshwater and marine; permanent and ephemeral; in every climatic zone

More information on Australia's wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in Australia is available from www.environment.gov.au/wetlands or the Ramsar Convention website at www.ramsar.org