

## December 2019 Communique

From across the Murray River Corridor the members of the Tri-State Murray Regional Alliance wish you a very happy Festive Season and look forward to working with you in 2020 to build the economy, secure the environment and motivate the community of the Murray River Corridor.



### Canberra Visit

The Alliance Executive greatly appreciated the information and advice they received during their day of meetings across NRM organisations in Canberra in late September. This included highlighting key policy reviews, discussing short-term priorities and emphasising the importance of personal engagement. Given the breadth of capabilities across the Alliance, the meetings covered the broad areas of water, agriculture and the environment. The Alliance Executive has been actively following up each of the suggestions and looks forward to on-going contact in the future.

### Native Fish Program

The Irrigation Fish Screen initiative (led by North Central CMA) has won the River Basin Management Society Innovation Award. A great achievement through a collaboration between the private sector, government, community and NRM organisations. Research has demonstrated that these self-cleaning fish screens prevent native fish larvae and young fish being lost to irrigation channels – the equivalent of ‘fish deserts’. For example, prior to the screens being implemented over 5,500 native fish larvae were lost every day just to the Cohuna Channel. Great to see one of the three critical sites for fish screens has already been addressed – one down – two to go!



Peter Rose (Native Fish project officer) was able to participate in an MDBA Native Fish Strategy Workshop in Canberra, hear the MDBA plan and share the Murray River Corridor Native Fish Blueprint developed by scientists, on-ground staff and the community. There is a great deal of opportunity to work together to create the critical habitat needed to ensure the future for native fish species in the Murray River.

The ‘Magnificent Six’ (wetland specialists) are getting further attention following the review of their status which showed how ‘at risk’ they truly are. The research, program delivery and community members are getting together again in Deniliquin to progress their shared work program and discuss how to accelerate implementation.

The Alliance would like to congratulate Phil Duncan (Gomerioi man and Australian representative for ‘World Fish Migration Day’) for his appointment as Chair of the MDBA Community Advisory Council. The Alliance was very fortunate to have Phil attend a recent native fish forum and launch the Murray River Corridor Native Fish ‘Blueprint’ and we look forward to the results of his on-going drive to improve the condition of the Murray River, Country and Communities.

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## Indigenous Program



The Indigenous Program continues to grow and consolidate.

The first group of participating Aboriginal business enterprises have now completed their initial property assessments. The businesses will commence by collectively focussing on honey production. This not only builds on the experience amongst the Noongar partners (from Western Australia) but also allows them to collectively meet an established market demand.

The East-West Alliance has met with the Hon. Ken Wyatt (Minister for Indigenous Australians) and is working with his office to implement the East West prospectus in partnership with Indigenous Business Australia.

## National NRM Conference – Wodonga

We know that a number of you were able to get to the November National NRM Knowledge Conference and hope you caught the presentations on the Alliance's Indigenous and the Native Fish Programs. The Conference theme of 'Creating resilience through NRM' matched the intent of the Tri-State Murray Alliance. The Alliance presentations showed that by taking a landscape approach; creating linkages between people, organisations and issues and focusing on leverage and tipping points we can build resilience of both people and the ecosystem.



## Land Resilience – Drought Resilience

As the dry conditions deepen and the community's understanding that these weather patterns will be a part of their future, the Alliance is seeing how critical it is to take a resilience approach to our land-based



work. This is not only highly relevant to our communities and industries but also builds on the National NRM Knowledge conference theme and the *Call to Action* arising from this forum.

As initial steps, the Alliance will, individually and collectively, have input into the emerging Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024 and the Alliance Project Officer will bring together the farm and land specialists to scope out the next steps.

We encourage all our supporters to provide a submission to the Future Drought Fund <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/future-drought-fund>.

For further information, please don't hesitate to contact Fiona Johnson, Executive Officer, on 0419 130 719 or [tristatenrm@gbcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:tristatenrm@gbcma.vic.gov.au)