

10 December 2020 – For Immediate Release

WORKS COMMENCE TO RECONNECT LAKE BONNEY TO THE MIGHTY MURRAY

Iconic Lake Bonney will soon be reconnected to the River Murray, as works on the reopening process have begun.

State and Local agencies have been working on a reopening strategy that will ensure that Lake Bonney is rightfully reconnected to the River Murray, as soon as it is safe to do so. At the current river levels, key infrastructure would be catastrophically impacted, which would see inundation of Nappers Bridge, significant impacts on already submerged stormwater infrastructure on Barmera's foreshore and inundation of low-lying properties around the lake.

Berri Barmera Council Infrastructure Manager David Pluckhahn said that it was more than physical infrastructure at risk. "Since the closure, we've been working with the River Murray Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, the traditional custodians of the land and waters around Lake Bonney, who identified a number of culturally significant heritage sites that we need to ensure are protected during the opening"

"The levee at Nappers Bridge has done exactly what it was constructed to do, in protecting infrastructure and these critical sites, and it is vital that we ensure the inlet reopening is managed so that it doesn't undo the protection it is providing" Mr Pluckhahn continued.

Current measurements taken on Tuesday, 10 January 2023 indicate that the river remains approximately 2.1m higher than Lake Bonney and requires a significant decrease in height before a safe and manageable opening can be achieved.

Council's Manager for Environment and Regulatory Services Tracey Alexander said that the opening strategy is designed to ensure the protection of culturally significant sites as well as realising the benefits of an influx of fresh water into the lake. "It's important that we ensure that the undeniable environmental and ecological benefits of reopening the inlet, do not cause flow on impacts to these cultural sites". "It's important that all agencies involved in the process, and the wider community understand the sensitivities and complexities involved in this project" she said.

It is expected that the river will need to recede more than 1m before work can begin on physically opening the inlet, however contractors will begin preparing for the process this week, including installing protections and safeguarding significant cultural heritage sites around the lake. A more refined timeline will be established over the coming days, and community are encouraged to visit SA.GOV.AU for more information on the flood event.

Council is also commencing remediation works, after the flood peak passed the region in December. Landscaping works on the lawn area, adjacent Riverjacks Café in Berri, will begin shortly, with further remediation works across the council area to start in the coming weeks.

Council is also focusing on the long-term recovery and improvements as a result of the recent flood event. Over the coming weeks Council will explore where works can be undertaken to not only remediate areas, but also future proof them as part of the recovery phase. Council will provide further information to the community as these plans have progressed.

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