

The Tullaroop catchment is part of the Loddon River Basin that features highly productive grazing and cropping agricultural land, significant wetlands, and terrestrial habitats.

The catchment has sites of major significance to Traditional Owners, the Djaara people. Along with the major creeks these wetlands provide food and medicine, and places to camp, hunt, fish, swim and hold ceremonies.

They are places that are central to Djaara creation stories, and many Djaara cultural heritage sites are associated with waterways – burial sites, birthing sites and middens.

The aim of the **Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project** is to create a healthy, continuous riparian corridor along Birch's and Tullaroop creeks, that flow into the Tullaroop Reservoir.

This will improve river blackfish and platypus populations and improve water quality in the Tullaroop Reservoir.

Better water quality will reduce blue-green algae blooms in the Tullaroop Reservoir, keep our raw water sources clean, and reduce water treatment costs.

Tullaroop Reservoir supplies drinking water for the residents of Maryborough and surrounding towns, as well as irrigation water for downstream users along the Loddon/Murray system.

The project will also provide significant cultural benefits, engage the local community, and promote citizen science activities, such as Waterwatch monitoring.

Threats to waterways

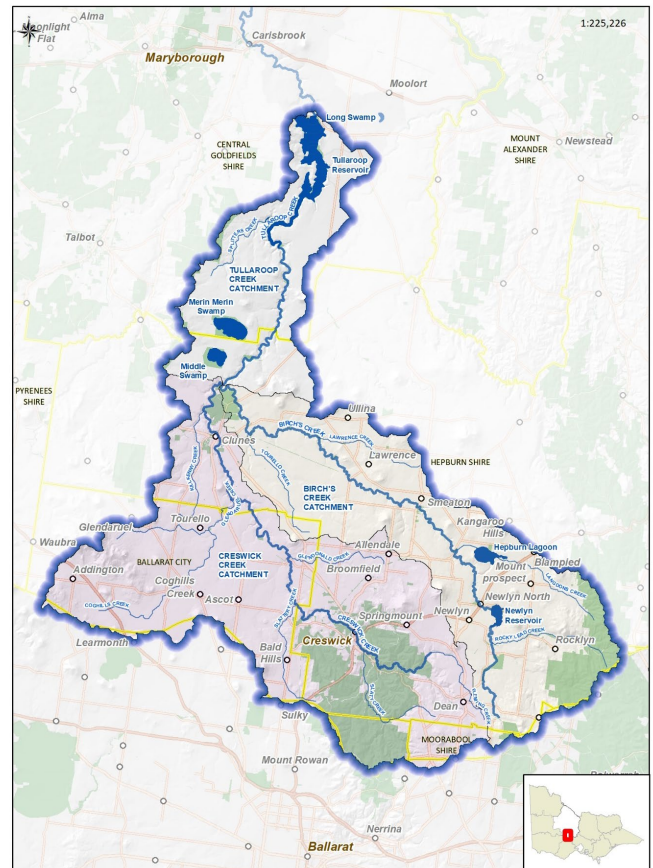
The catchment's waterways face increased pressure from agricultural intensification, lifestyle development, and recreational access to Tullaroop Reservoir.

Historical agriculture development and practices in the Tullaroop catchment have resulted in uncontrolled stock access and widespread loss of native vegetation along waterways, reducing water quality and contributing to a significant decline in the health of waterways.

Climate change, through reduced rainfall and higher temperatures is predicted to have a major impact on

water yield and river flows; this will exacerbate existing threats to water quality and waterway health.

Crack willows are a declared Weed of National Significance. They have a largely negative impact on Australian waterways by diverting flows, using large amounts of water compared to native trees and reducing natural waterway habitat values, including that of the platypus.



Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project area

Recommended actions

The Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project is based on recommendations in the comprehensive Tullaroop Integrated Catchment Management Plan (ICMP) developed in 2021 by consultants Natural Decision who partnered with Djandak (the business arm of Dja Dja

Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation). The Plan was commissioned by North Central CMA and Central Highlands Water, with input received from other key stakeholder organisations, community groups and local community members.



Djandak played a significant role in identifying values of importance to Traditional Owners in the project area through completion of an Aboriginal Waterway Assessment completed in 2021.

The incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge has fundamentally shaped the plan and the priority on-ground and community engagement actions to be delivered.

This plan has successfully broken new ground through the integration of insights, knowledge, and techniques from both a western scientific tradition and those of our Traditional Owners in identifying long-term, practical, and meaningful actions to improve catchment health outcomes.

This Plan identified the best value for money actions in terms of environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits for the estimated cost, scaled where the best value was going to be achieved in the catchment.



To date, \$918,000 has been secured by the North Central CMA through the Victorian Government's 2021-24 Waterway Health program. Additional funding will be sourced by partner organisations, Central Highlands Water, Goulburn Murray Water and Djandak.

Recommended actions include:

- Working with landholders to fence the remaining 46km of Birch's and Tullaroop creeks to limit stock access
- Revegetate 90ha of streambanks along Birch's and Tullaroop creeks with native species.
- Provide alternative off-stream watering infrastructure along newly fenced sections of Birch's and Tullaroop creeks to ensure farmers can access water for their livestock
- Work with landholders and Goulburn Murray Water to restrict direct livestock access to Tullaroop Reservoir (without restricting recreational access). This involves installing 35 km of fencing and associated off-stream watering
- Djandak to lead revegetation and weed removal works is planned for Long, Middle, and Merin Merin swamps in partnership with land managers Trust for Nature and Parks Victoria
- Djandak to lead cultural burning at key sites to improve cultural and ecological values
- Councils to work with property owners on septic tank audits and compliance
- Removal of highly invasive willows and woody weeds along 45km of Birch's and Tullaroop creeks
- 40 snag piles to be installed in Birch's and Tullaroop creeks to increase instream woody habitat for native fish, in particular river blackfish.



For more information

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