



## Western Murray Land Improvement Group

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Breathing New Life Into The Barham Lakes**

A combined community project will begin soon to restore and enhance the habitat of the Barham lakes complex, which in time, we aim for public recreation uses.

The four interconnected manmade lakes which lie adjacent to the Murray River and Eagle Creek cutting, were constructed by CluBarham in the 1980s and originally stocked with native fish species. Up until 2018, the lakes complex was open to the public for recreational fishing and offered 4 kilometres of popular walking tracks.

Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) has convened interested stakeholders and secured funding from CluBarham to begin stage one of the five stage project. This will initially establish a threatened native small-bodied fish nursery and refuge site at the old swimming area. Targeted small-bodied fish include endangered southern pygmy perch and purple spotted gudgeon.

Alongside improved ecological outcomes, the rehabilitation and revegetation of the Barham Lakes complex will boost cross-community engagement and use of the site with the collaboration of local groups, including CluBarham, Eagle Creek Trust, Barham Landcare, Barham and District Services Memorial Angling Club, Moama Local Aboriginal Landcare and Barham High School.

As part of the Edward-Kolety-Wakool system, the Barham Lakes complex is recognised as a priority area for fish diversity, including threatened and endangered species.

The Lakes complex has a self-sustaining population of endangered Freshwater Eel Tailed Catfish. A site management plan has been developed by an ecologist and DNA research conducted on this species has determined suitability for translocation to other sites as the catfish have a strong and diverse genetic composition.

Given its proximity to the Murray River and Eagle Creek, Barham Lakes Complex has been identified as an important ecological site using environmental and consumptive water to develop threatened native fish breeding areas.



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Stage 1 will protect and restore the Barham Lakes complex habitat by:

- protecting the biodiversity of threatened fish species in the Edward-Koety-Wakool region
- creating refuges to mitigate risks to fauna from climate change, variability and disturbances
- restoring hydrologic and fish connectivity between Murray River, Eagle creek and Barham Lakes complex
- building community awareness, education and understanding of complementary measures in environmental water delivery
- develop social licence that adds value through co-design principles from community groups

WMLIG will provide professional project management experience and on-ground coordination of cross-community organisations, within the agreed framework of CluBarham and operating conditions of state and federal organisations.

Revegetation works required for the project will be carried out by Barham High School students under the supervision of Landcare volunteers. Project works will commence in the coming months.

For further information, please contact WMLIG - [admin@wmlig.org](mailto:admin@wmlig.org) 03 5453 1577