

Activity Update November 2025

This activity update is for the month of November 2025. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke at the above email address, or view it on our webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding including the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants and contract work.

Support the objectives of Mid Murray Landcare SA.

1. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, invoicing, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO.
2. Sent out monthly activity update, agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee.
3. We held our monthly meeting at Cambrai Primary School library.
4. Attended the LASA AGM in Adelaide and spoke about our Landcare group and presented the YouTube video on our Western Pygmy Possum Project, it was very well received, with lots of questions and people wanting to get involved and make boxes.

Support volunteer activities at the Cambrai Community Nursery, provide support to landholders, groups, and schools with land management projects.

5. Volunteers have been potting on *Hakea*, doing cuttings of *Eremophila's* and *Myoporum*.
6. Provided support to nine landholders or groups with site visits or project support or plant identification, including site visits to plan projects for revegetation and weed control.

Manage Meldanda on behalf of the Cambrai Primary School Governing Council

7. Continued with managing the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administration managing the booking page, cleaning, watered.
8. Camp bookings - we had ten camp nights for November, including Gawler Scout Group, seventeen adults and twenty children of which four were for the Astronomy Paddock,
9. Landcare volunteers Cameron and Sheralee did some fence maintenance in the front garden and controlled some woody weeds.
10. Supported MRLB YEL Forum 'Precious Plants' at Meldanda, there were four different schools who came, Cambrai, Jervois, Little Hampton and Meningie. We did a seed hunt at Meldanda, and then looked at the different features under microscopes, we also found a legless lizard and learnt about different propagation techniques at the Landcare nursery.



Figure 1 YEL Forum at Landcare Nursery



Figure 2 legless lizard found at Meldanda

Support the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve Committee and Mid Murray Council with projects to maintain dark sky accreditation and education on the impacts of light pollution. - Chris Tugwell and Kate Wills.

11. Swan Reach Observatory officially opened. Around 50 people attended. Officially opened by Senator Don Farrell. Thanks to David Bennett and the Planewave technicians for getting it up and running.
12. John George has invited Don Bursill, Chris Tugwell, Andrew Cool and Ken Grant from our team, along with Dean Brown, Des Caulfield and Steve Pendry, to be Directors for the Observatory
13. SA Power Networks have almost finished installing new streetlights. Just 3 to go. Positive feedback so far.

14. The ADSA light pollution petition, which got 12,000 signatures from around Australia, was presented to federal Parliament by Tony Zappia.
15. CJT responded to online enquiries
16. Response from Minister regarding Freight Bypass does not address increased light or safety issues
17. SA Power Networks have promised out-dated security lights outside Cambrai Primary School will be removed on 5th December
18. Discussion with Prof. Theresa Jones (Melbourne Uni.) re. possible bird call Citizen Science project
19. Council Dark Sky committee meeting (Don Bursill, Ros Schultz and Chris Tugwell attended)
20. Discussions with neighbouring Councils re. new developments installing compliant lighting
21. Discussion of formation of new Dark Sky committee outside Council, working with MM Landcare SA
22. CJT suggested adding 'and skies' to Council's welcome to country. Indigenous community to be consulted.
23. Joe Grida's monthly 'what's in the sky' article in The Advertiser has been using star maps created by software called Starplot, free of charge, for many years. The Advertiser cancelled Joe's long-running feature articles in early 2025, but he has continued to provide them for our website, with the star maps. In September, the creator of the software (Kym Thalassoudis) contacted Joe saying he did not have permission to use the software for our website and requesting all-star map created with his software be removed. If we wanted to continue using his maps, we would have to have a commercial agreement of \$100 per image. The committee felt we could not afford this expense and found an alternative using free Stellarium software.
24. Calperum Station, north of Renmark, is applying for Dark Sky status
25. Kate fixed the power point issue for the SQM laptop with a piece of wood and some screws (very high tech)
26. Social media posts continue to raise public interest and engagement. Thanks Kate!

October Communications/Social Media activity. – Kate Wills

RMIDSR Social Media Summary (November 2025)

	NOV	OCT
FOLLOWERS	1995	1919
FB	1960	1894
IG	32	22
X	3	3
VIEWS	31,300	13,242
FB	25,500	10,942
IG	2,300	1,800
X	3500	500

Digital Performance & Capacity

- **Reach Expansion:** Total public views across all platforms surged to 31,300 in November, a 236% increase compared to the previous month.
- **Targeted Growth:** Visibility on X (Twitter) saw a 600% increase in impressions (from 500 to 3,500), strengthening engagement with national policy and scientific stakeholders.
- **Engagement Validation:** Facebook Page interactions are up 99% (comments, shares, reactions) to 646. The content strategy is actively driving high-value community involvement and reinforcing the health of the platform algorithms.
- **Strategic Sharing:** Posts were strategically cross-published into local community and specialist astro-photography groups, broadening organic reach into specific, engaged demographics. This approach directly resulted in the biggest single increase in views and follower growth across our Facebook channel by tapping into highly motivated external audiences.

- **Community Sourcing as Key Driver:** The highly successful #ShareYourPics Aurora Australis campaign demonstrated the power of community-driven content, generating the highest engagement and successfully sourcing 50+ local images from the Reserve area.

Content & Strategic Alignment

- **Ambassador Network Building:** While numerically small (+10 new followers), the growth on Instagram was strategically significant, consisting of high-impact astro-photographers who represent a crucial future asset for generating world-class content and building the Reserve's ambassador network.
- **Dark Sky Partner Reciprocity:** Dedicated Partner Feature (MMC, MRLCTA, SAPN and NPWSSA) posts performed consistently well across all three platforms. This strategy highlights crucial collaboration and has resulted in demonstrable reciprocity (e.g., sharing/mentions) and deepened personal outreach connections with each featured organisation.
- **Partnership & Legacy Focus:** Content focused on the 6-Year Anniversary and the importance of Dark Sky Partners achieved high organic visibility, validating that the Reserve's unique market position—community and conservation—is the most resonant message with the public.
- **Partnership Amplification:** The announcement of the #GreatNews regarding the ADSA 'Petition to Parliament' was a top-performing post, validating the importance of national Dark Sky advocacy in driving digital engagement.
- **Platform Priority:** All platform algorithms are consistently prioritising our high-quality visual content, ensuring maximum organic exposure for core #landcare #skycare messaging.



Support Citizen Science projects in the region to engage landholders and volunteers in to increase awareness and help to protect our natural biodiversity.

27. **Turtles** – Identified a short-necked species of turtle for landholder and started planning nest surveys for next year.
28. **Possums** – Prince Alfred College, Scott's Creek are keen to make possum boxes as part of their education program, we will provide them with a template that one of our volunteers has professionally drawn up. We will also use this to be distributed to the attendees of the LASA AGM that were interested in the possum project, along with our brochure.
29. **Feral Scan** – There were eleven sightings submitted to Feral Scan, from four contributors with over one hundred and twenty goats sighted.
30. **Microbats** - Inspected bat box on the tree at Keyneton Hall with local landholder, there was nothing in there yet. Got bat detector ready for landholders on Sleeper Track to borrow.
31. Dennis Matthews captured a microbat landing on a possum box whilst trialling a new camera.



Figure 3 Murray Short Neck.



Figure 4 Lesser long-eared bat on possum box.

Murray Darling Carpet Python Project

32. There have been numerous python sightings this month which has been exciting. We had a sighting in a pump shed near the Murray River and the landholder was keen not to have it in his shed. Harrison Kent visited the site and met with the landholder, the snake ended up being a Centralian Python, it may have been a released pet, it has been taken into professional care, the landholder is very pleased.



Figure 5 Centralian python in pump shed.

33. Spent a couple days in the Riverland when the detection dogs from Skylos Ecology came back to do some in field training on turtle nests, and we included some more searches for the pythons whilst they were here.

34. We had some real interest from the dogs with a hollow in a large red gum tree on a property north of Paringa. We set a camera up on the hollow when we left the property to see if a python came out. The hollow was quite deep, we had inspected it with an endoscope camera but couldn't see anything but could feel a lot of heat coming from it. We didn't see a python exiting the hollow but got some footage of a Goanna and a Brushtail Possum leaving the hollow.



Figure 6 camera on hollow

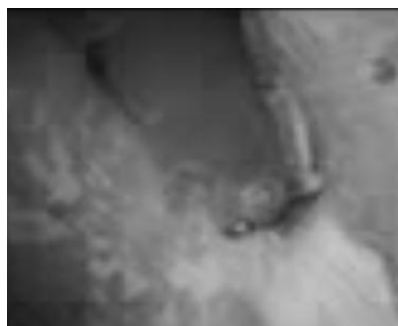


Figure 7 Brushtail Possum



Figure 8 Goanna

35. We also had some more excitement with the pythons as there was a sighting submitted in the Renmark area that Harrison Kent was able to get to, he had to get a Kayak to get to the tree where the python had been spotted, he managed to get his hands on the python, but it retreated higher into the tree, we just missed out on our first real opportunity to be able to start the tracking side of this project.
36. There was also a sighting submitted from Black Hill crossing the road, we know there have been previous sightings in the area, it is really exciting to get these sightings away from the Murray River and to think that the Marne River and its surrounding vegetation communities can still support fauna like this in the region.



Figure 9 MD Python sighting near Black Hill



Figure 10 Skylos Ecology Team

Native Grasslands Project 2023-2026

37. **Seed production areas** – Aimee, Cryss, Brenton and Mick weeded and collected seed from, *Anthosachne scabra*, *Walwhalleya proluta*, *Rytidosperma caespitosum*, *Bulbine bulbosa*, and *Maireana excavata*.
38. Volunteers Sheralee and Cameron have been adding extra irrigation lines to area two, the non-grass side.
39. Volunteer Sheralee showed MRLB Ecologist Zoe Beer our seed production areas and went through the process of setting one up.
40. Aimee and volunteer Cryss went through all the seed bank to update the stocktake and put aside some C4 grass species for a seeding trial in the Riverland.



Figure 11 Lined earless dragon

41. **Tiliqua** – Five Landcare volunteers travelled up to Burra to help water the new *Lomandra* plantings, we interrupted a brown snake who we think was on its way to eat an *Tympanocryptis petersi*, lined earless dragon.
42. **Seeding trial** – site visit to seeding trial, took photos of each plot, assessed weed load to determine if this is a management action that needs to be taken.
43. Random survey of five spider holes in each plot, took photos down holes with camera looking for lizards, there were none, out of the fifteen holes there was only one vacant hole in the control plot and the rest were occupied by wolf spiders.



Figure 12 fifteen holes and fifteen wolf spiders.