

Activity Update December 2025 January 2026

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 months to the Committee.
3. We held our end of year meeting at Swan Reach Dark Sky Takeaway and were fortunate enough to have a tour of the Observatory in Swan Reach, this facility has seen over one million dollars of investment into the region for tourism and education. The telescope transmits a live feed into the Swan Reach Hotel, and the observatory is set up to cater for events with a kitchen, bathroom facilities and an area for presentations and educational talks.



Figure 2 SR observatory telescope

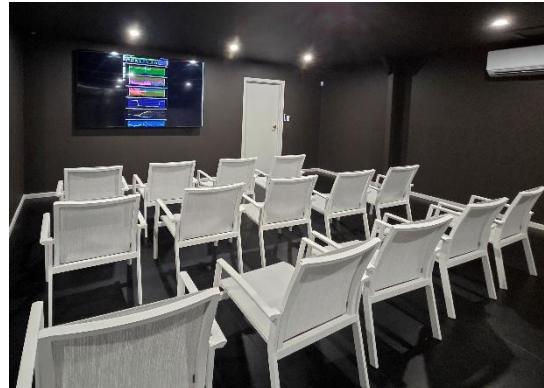


Figure 1 presentation area inside observatory

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

4. A big thank you to our Landcare volunteer David who braved the hot weather over December and January to make sure the nursery was watered properly so we didn't lose any plants.
5. We had a new sign made up for the nursery and have changed our name to Mid Murray Landcare SA Nursery, we also had matching signs printed by Bear Rock Signs for landholders' properties; to help promote the work we are supporting in the region. Thanks to Bec Gould MRLB for helping with the design work.
6. Provided support to nine landholders or groups with site visits or project support or plant identification, including organising a re-print of Simply Saltbush plant identification book and weed control for Keyneton Community Association Street scape project.



Figure 3 New nursery sign

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 thirty-seven camp nights for December and January, sixty-seven adults and twelve children of which sixteen were for the Astronomy Paddock.
9. Big thank you to our Landcare volunteers Cameron and Sheralee who braved the hot weather of December and January to care for Meldanda for campers and any watering that was needed.
10. We held a thankyou BBQ for the volunteers before Christmas and put some seed bags on some *Acacia salicina* that were donated to us by Hannah Driden.

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. Chris - Annual report to maintain the dark sky accreditation for the RMIDSR.
12. Kate – Social Media Update

Summary The December and January period marked a strategic shift from general awareness to technical education and community mobilisation. By integrating the "Night Life" and "From the Ground to the Stars" themes, we have successfully linked astronomical preservation with terrestrial Landcare outcomes (#Skycare).

JAN	DEC	
FOLLOWERS	2105	2045
Facebook	2042	1998
Instagram	61	45
X (Twitter)	2	2
VIEWS	27,019	23,727
Facebook	24,225	20,772
Instagram	1544	2355
X (Twitter)	1250	600

Campaign Performance

- **December (Night Life of the Reserve):** Focused on nocturnal ecology and the "Night Shift." This series highlighted the RMIDSR's Gold Tier commitment to the biological environment, demonstrating that darkness is a habitat requirement.
- **January (From the Ground to the Stars):** Introduced "The Four Pillars" (Light, Sound, Soil, Air). This campaign built the necessary technical vocabulary among our followers to understand industrial threats, specifically the environmental impacts of the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass (GAFB).

Key Metrics & Reach

- **Performance Peaks:** Reached 3,972 people in a single day (20 January) during the Aurora campaign. December reach remained stable with peaks of ~2,400.
- **Strategic Sharing:** By sharing to 12+ niche groups (Astronomy, Photography, Tourism, and Community), we have successfully expanded our footprint beyond the local region and bypassed traditional algorithm limits.
- **Content Efficiency:** Converting weekly educational posts into short-form Reels remains our highest-performing strategy. This "Evergreen" approach ensures core messaging remains visible without depleting volunteer resources.

Operational Milestones

- **Platform Expansion:** Successfully rebranded the MMLSA YouTube channel to "Mid Murray Landcare SA & Dark Sky Reserve" and launched on Threads to capture short-form engagement.
- **The "I'M IN" Campaign:** Recruited over 20 new members to the "Dark Sky Army." This group represents a ready-response team for future advocacy and citizen science.
- **Library Nightscape Kits:** Developed the framework for "Smartphone Nightscape Hire Kits" for Mid Murray libraries. Aimed at the May 2026 Firstival, this provides a low-barrier entry point for community engagement.
- **Asset Management:** Currently updating the 2021 Fact Sheet and maintaining reciprocity with Mid Murray Council and Dark Sky Partners through dedicated support posts.

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

13. **Turtles** – Supported landholders with their Grassroot Grant progress report – Turtle nest protection' project at Caloote, the landholders have been monitoring the fence and have not had any foxes inside the

fenced area and have successfully captured turtles coming into the area.



Figure 4 two turtles inside fenced area



Figure 5 fox on outside of fenced area

14. **Possums** – A landholder from near Blanchetown sent in some camera trap photos to be identified, they were of a Dunnart.
15. Also had photos sent from Gluepot of the beginnings of a nest in one box and a large number of unidentified scats in another, they could be possum, will wait and see what starts using the box.
16. **Feral Scan** – There were twenty sightings submitted to Feral Scan, from twelve contributors with over one hundred and thirty goats sighted.



Figure 6 photo of Dunnart

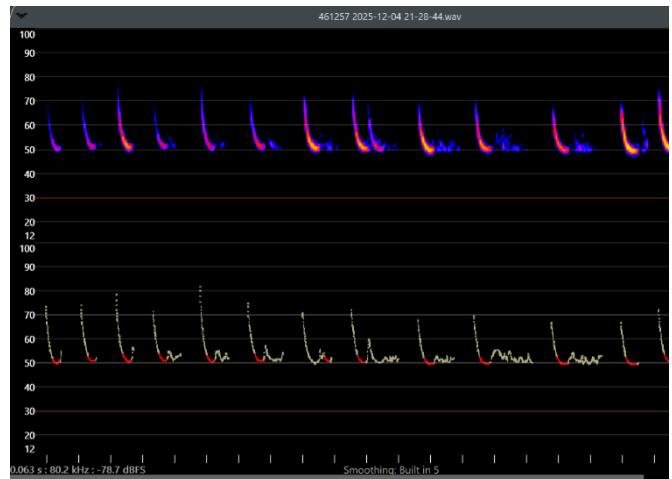


Figure 7 bat call from a Little Forest Bat

17. **Microbats** – Lent bat detector to landholders who have 300+ acres on Sleeper Track, provided a report to them on the bat species on their property, over seven nights of recording they had a total of six different bat species, including the Little Forest Bat whose call can be seen

above. We will re-do the monitoring in March to see if there is any difference in species or activity levels.

Murray Darling Carpet Python Project

18. Collected camera traps that were set up on cliffs north of Blanchetown where there was a sighting of a python. The two cameras captured great photos of birds, rabbits, lizards and rodents, but none were of the MD carpet python.
19. Roadside mail drop with volunteer Cryss along Black Hill Road, we did forty boxes with a letter about the recent sighting on Black Hill Road and to call project lead, Mel Burford directly if one is seen, we also included a magnetic postcard with information about the project and iSPYthon.

Native Grasslands Project 2023-2026

20. **Seed production areas** – Collected *Anthosachne scabra* and *Themeda triandra*. Updated seed bank list for Meldanda SPA and sent to relevant MRLB staff. Sent list of C4 grass seed put aside for MRLB potential project.
21. **Seeding trial** – engaged contractors to implement minor weed control until we work out the best approach for the trial site. The priority weed was Saffron thistle across the 3 plots; weight records were kept of what was removed from each plot.