



Commonwealth of Australia

Inclusion of ecological communities in the list of threatened ecological communities under section 181 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EC92)

I, MARK BUTLER, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Water, pursuant to paragraph 184(1)(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, hereby amend the list referred to in section 181 of that Act by:

including in the list in the **critically endangered** category

River Murray and associated wetlands, floodplains and groundwater systems, from the junction with the Darling River to the sea

as described in the Schedule to this instrument and titled 'River Murray and associated wetlands, floodplains and groundwater systems, from the junction with the Darling River to the sea'.

Dated this.....5th.....day of.....August.....2013

Signed

Mark Butler

MARK BUTLER

Minister for Environment, Heritage and Water

SCHEDULE

River Murray and associated wetlands, floodplains and groundwater systems, from the junction with the Darling River to the sea

The ecological community consists of the assemblage of native flora, fauna and micro-organisms associated with and dependent upon the River Murray lowland floodplain-river system, below the river's confluence with the Darling River. It is a complex aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem of interconnected environmental sub-units including: the river channel, lakes and estuary; associated tributaries and streams; floodplain wetlands and woodlands; and groundwater.

The ecological community occurs within the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB; Murrundi), and extends from the confluence of the Murray and Darling rivers near Wentworth in New South Wales to the mouth of the Murray, near Goolwa in South Australia. It incorporates the River Murray and its floodplain, including the Lower Lakes, the Coorong, the Murray Estuary and the Murray Mouth, as well as associated tributaries, including streams of the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges.

The ecological community can be divided into six bio-geographical sub-units along the length of the main channel that have characteristic ecological identities and are highly connected. These sub-units are summarised as follows:

- *Top Valley Section* - from the Darling junction near Wentworth, to Overland Corner. This section includes two Ramsar-listed wetland complexes, the Riverland and the Banrock Station.
- *Murray Gorge Section* - from Overland Corner to Mannum. The Marne and Saunders rivers enter this section from the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges.
- *Lower Swamplands Section* - from Mannum, past Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend to Wellington. Reedy Creek flows into this section.
- *Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Section* - incorporates the perennial and ephemeral streams within the region defined by the Prescribed Water Resources Areas for the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and the Marne-Saunders.
- *Lower Lakes Section* - between Wellington and the Coorong there is a shallow lake system with marginal wetlands and adjacent ephemeral saline ponds (including Lake Alexandrina and the terminal Lake Albert).
- *Coorong and Murray Mouth Section* - the estuarine terminus of the River Murray (and the MDB), including associated islands and coastal sand dune systems.

The upstream boundary is at Lock 10, near the confluence of the Murray and Darling rivers. The downstream boundary is at the Murray Mouth and the Coorong, and includes associated sand dune systems, peninsulas, islands and fringing saline wetlands. The general boundary envelope for the ecological community is the 1956 flood line.