Gawler River/Kadlitpari Restoration Guide Summary

A healthy river supporting nature, people and food production

Discover the Gawler River / Kadlitpari and why caring for it matters

Celebrate the natural and cultural heart of this landscape - the Gawler River Restoration Guide helps councils and landholders team up to care for it.

*At the meeting point of the North and South Para rivers, the **Gawler River / Kadlitpari** begins its journey across the northern Adelaide Plains. Known to the Kaurna people as Kadlitpari, or Wild Dog River, this waterway has long shaped the land and supported life.*

Constantly shifting and reshaping the land, it flows into wetlands and floodplains, watering farms and communities. For thousands of years, Kaurna families have cared for this Country, and their deep connection to the river continues today – reflected in sacred sites, stories, and stewardship. As the region grows and changes, the river remains a vital thread linking nature, culture, and community.

The Gawler River region is a powerhouse of productivity – supporting primary production and providing food for the local, national and export markets. As new communities grow within the region, this natural landscape will become even more valuable, offering space for recreation, cultural connection, and vital physical and mental health benefits. These qualities strengthen local economies and enrich lives.

But the river and its surroundings are under pressure. Weed invasion, habitat loss, and altered water flows threaten its future. We've developed the **Gawler River / Kadlitpari Restoration Guide** (the Guide) to support land managers and want their efforts to make a lasting difference. Restoring Kadlitpari's health isn't just about saving a river – it's about protecting an iconic lifeline for nature, culture, and community. Together, we can ensure this region thrives for generations to come.

Key messages of the guide

Acknowledge Aboriginal heritage

- Ensure cultural values are protected, especially when working with soil or native plants.

Recognise, protect & connect diverse vegetation communities of the area

- Ecosystem health depends on the connection and interaction of a variety of wildlife and vegetation communities in the landscape.

Make space for the river to breathe

- Occasional flooding is natural and needed for plants and wildlife—work with the water pulses and natural erosion to allow the river to flow and move.

Natural restoration benefits everyone

- A healthy, resilient landscape benefits all who use it—including growers, residents, community groups and local economies.

Use Open Space planning

- New developments should include green spaces that protect and connect natural areas.

A Landscape Transformed

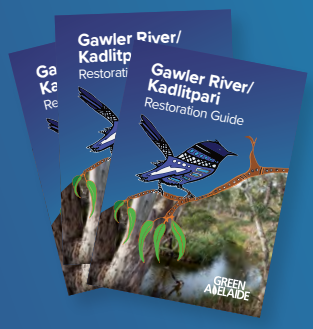
The Gawler River corridor tells a tale of resilience and diversity. Once home to bilbies, plains wanderers (a small land dwelling bird), and flocks of pink cockatoos (and much more), the river corridor has changed dramatically through farming and development. Yet, pockets of resilience remain as woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands. Five key vegetation communities of the region highlighted in the Guide are:

1. **River Red Gum Riverine Forest** – Iconic canopy trees, vital for hollow-nesting fauna.
2. **Black Box Floodplain Woodlands** – Rare remnants on heavy clay soils.
3. **River Red Gum Floodplain Woodlands** – Historic giants of the lower floodplain.
4. **Floodplain Shrublands** – Lignum and chenopod shrublands supporting unique fauna.
5. **Grasslands** – Once widespread; now critically rare (0.05% remains).

Restoring these five communities requires a shared effort. Local land managers, volunteers, and Traditional Owners will need to work together to revive the Gawler River corridor, protect biodiversity, and strengthen the region. This ensures future generations can depend on it for life and livelihood.

The focus area of the Gawler River Restoration Guide

Be a part of it – grab a copy of the Guide



Community groups, landholders, and councils have already laid the groundwork—through weed control, revegetation, and cultural engagement. Now let's keep building on the great work.

The *Gawler River / Kadlitpari Restoration Guide* builds on these efforts, bringing together local knowledge into a practical resource designed to inspire and support collective action. Its purpose is clear: to help restore and protect the vital natural and cultural assets of the Gawler River and its surrounding landscapes.

The Guide offers practical tools and insights, including:

- **Step-by-step instructions** for successful site restoration.
- **Comprehensive guidance** on site-sensitive weed management.
- **Detailed profiles** of the five key vegetation communities.
- **An overview** of the historical and current natural features of the Gawler River and its surrounds.
- **Essential considerations** for planning works to achieve best-practice outcomes.

Together, we can safeguard the Gawler River – for today, and for generations to come.

For further information on how to get a Guide:

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