

MEDIA RELEASE

5 June 2023

‘Seeds from the sky’ at Winton Wetlands

Seeds will be “raining from the sky” this week at Winton Wetlands, as a specially designed heavy-duty drone drops thousands of native plant seed pods into hard-to-reach corners of the wetland reserve.

The activity is being conducted by AirSeed, an Australian environmental restoration company helping to pioneer aerial plant seeding activities in Australia and beyond, supported by Treasury Wine Estates.

More than 40,000 seed pods are being deposited, with a mix of wetland plant species and native grass seeds.

This week’s activity follows a smaller trial in March involving river red gum seeding across an area of 50 hectares, and is part of an ongoing effort to test the efficacy of AirSeed’s frontier technology whether this form of seeding can increase the rate and scale of revegetation going on at Winton Wetlands and other restoration project locations.

If successful, further aerial seeding will go ahead on a bigger scale next summer.

Seeds are being sourced through a local seedbank known as the Goulburn Broken Indigenous Seedbank, with these seeds funded through the Murray Darling Basin Authority Healthy Rivers program as a contribution toward creating a healthier river system.

Winton Wetlands Restoration Manager Dr Lisa Farnsworth said the trialing of aerial seeding using drones was showing great promise.

“We’re excited and proud to be part of a pioneering effort to establish aerial revegetation activity on a much broader scale in Australia,” Dr Farnsworth said.

“If it works as well as we hope and expect, it will enable restoration of parts of the eco-system of Winton Wetlands at a much larger scale, and also help show the way to other restoration projects that may be able to do similar things.

“One of the nice aspects of this cutting-edge project is that it is happening at minimal cost to the public purse, given the involvement of commercial sponsors. It’s a win-win for everyone involved. We’re very grateful to AirSeed, Treasury Wine Estates, the Murray Darling Basin Authority, the Environment Protection Authority and other partners who are all pulling together to make a success of this activity.”

The AirSeed drone ‘Artemis’ involved in this week’s seeding activity is a specially designed heavy-duty industrial drone capable of carrying relatively heavy payloads into hard-to-access spots.

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- More information about AirSeed Technologies is available on the AirSeed website: <https://airseedtech.com/>
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