

# Murray Darling Association Inc.

admin@mda.asn.au  
www.mda.asn.au  
T (03) 5480 3805  
ABN: 64 636 490 493

463 High Street  
P.O. Box 1268  
Echuca, Vic 3564

## Region 7 Ordinary Meeting No 112 20 February 2020 MINUTES

1. **WELCOME**  
Meeting commenced at 6:30pm

2. **ATTENDANCE**

2.1 Present:

Cr Andrew Tilley	Chair, City of Mitcham
Mrs Jamie Barrett	Secretary, City of Mitcham
Thornton Harfield	City of Tea Tree Gully
Cr Shirley Halls	City of Playford
Cr Stephen Coppins	City of Playford
Ms Pauline Frost	Life Member
Cr Jessica Lintvelt	City of Tea Tree Gully
Cr John Kennedy	Campbelltown City Council
Mr Peter Bice	Adelaide Hills – Director Infrastructure and Operations
Cr Robin Coleman	City of Tea Tree Gully
Cr Peter Jamieson	City of Port Adelaide Enfield
Mayor Anne Monceaux	City of Burnside
Mr Chris Cowley	City of Burnside
Mr Gary Goland	Private Member
Mr Ray Najar	Private Member
Mr Peter Shepher	Private Member
Ms Lynda Yates	Member of the Public

2.2 Apologies:

Mayor Heather Holmes-Ross	City of Mitcham
Cr Clare Lindop	City of Holdfast Bay
Cr Sue Irvine	Campbelltown City Council

3. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING AND WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Cr Andrew Tilley from the City of Mitcham and Chair of Region 7 welcomed all members of the Murray Darling Association Region 7 to the meeting and ran through general housekeeping matters

4. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest declared

5. **MINUTES**

MOVED Cr John Kennedy

That the Minutes of Meeting No 111 of Adelaide Metro Region 7 held on Thursday 21 November 2019 be confirmed

SECONDED Ms Pauline Frost

CARRIED

**6. MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION BOARD MINUTES**

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Board Meeting No 392, 393 and 394 held in November, December and January respectively can be viewed by clicking on the following link.

[Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings of the MDA Board](#)

**7. REPORT FROM THE CEO**

Ms Emma Bradbury, CEO, spoke to the February 2020 CEO Report (**Attachment A**) and took questions from the group.

[Chief Executive Officer Reports](#)

**8. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Cr Andrew Tilley engaged the group in an open conversation following on from the CEO report. Discussions around replacement of monsoon affected areas with same farming styles or should we look at helping the land by varying the use. Follow on conversations around smarter soil choices with better water retention.

Conversation lead to promoting the group and encouraging members to report back to their Council's to widen awareness.

**9. GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Ms Deana Mildren**

Regional Engagement Officer, Lower Murray  
Murray-Darling basin Authority

Refer to **Attachment B**

Ms Mildren presented then answered questions from the group.

**Dr Tariq Laattoe**

Innovative Groundwater Solutions

Refer to **Attachment C**

Dr Laattoe presented then answered questions from the group.

**10. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**10.1 Upcoming AGM**

Our next scheduled meeting will be the AGM where all positions will become vacant. Nomination forms were handed out to interested parties.

**10.2 Report from Cr Coleman**

Refer to **Attachment D**

**11. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the MDA Region 7 will be held on Thursday 21 May 2020 at a City of Holdfast Bay, commencing at 6.30 pm.

**12. CLOSE 9:39pm**

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks the City of Tea Tree Gully for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 7.*





## Chief Executive Officer's Report

February 2020

Emma Bradbury  
ceo@mda.asn.au

## 1. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
20/01/2020	Board Meeting 394	
20/01/2020	Meeting with Chris Bilkey – Mayor Murray Rivers Council	Echuca
21/01/2020	Malcolm Thompson – Discussions MDBA Chair	Telephone
23/01/2020	Town Hall Session with the Inspector General	Deniliquin
24/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Brewarrina	Via Zoom
28/01/2020	Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting	Via Zoom
29/01/2020	National Indigenous Australian Agency	Echuca
29/01/2020	Region 4 Ordinary Meeting	Via Zoom
30/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Wentworth	Via Zoom
30/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Shepparton	Via Zoom
04/02/2020	Celine Steinfield - Wentworth Group – MDBA Roundtable	Via Zoom
05/02/2020	BCLP Discussions: Paul Childs, Jarrod Eaton and Iain Ellis	Via Zoom
06/02/2020	Mike Stewardson – One Basin CRC discussions	Telephone
07/02/2020	Angus Mackie – Minister Pavey’s Office	Via Zoom
10/02/2020	Adam O’Bied Advisor to Water Minister Anthony Lynham QLD	Telephone
10/02/2020	MDB roundtable discussions	Via Zoom
11/02/2020	Regional diversification discussions – Moree Regional Council	Via Zoom
13/02/2020	76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference Committee Meeting	Via Zoom
14/02/2020	Region 6 – AGM and Ordinary Meeting	Via Zoom

## 2. Basin Communities Leadership Project – BCLP

### Project Stages / Current status:

- Stage 1) Program Design and Development *[Underway – Progressing]*
- Stage 1a) Participant / Candidate Recruitment *[Underway – Progressing]*
- Stage 2) Leadership Program Delivery *[Awaiting completion of stage 1 / 1a]*
- Stage 3) Community Project Delivery Support *[Awaiting completion of stage 2]*
- Stage 4) Consolidation / Refurbishment / OILLS *[Awaiting completion of stage 3]*

### Progress Comments:

- A mature advertising and recruitment campaign has commenced with applications being made.
- Coordination of the venue bookings and support arrangements are underway.
- Some Councils have responded with their support – following up with those who have not yet responded.
- Training / Business Support Officer recruitment due FEB / MAR.



**Risks / Opportunities:**

- Risks – successfully aligning all the guest presenters and support networks to synchronise / support dates across the 15 x locations.
- Risks – external support arrangements and requested materials / services meeting project timelines.

**3. Discussions with Angus Mackie – Minister Pavey’s Office**

- Invitation extended to Minister Pavey to attend the next Region 10 Meeting in late February.
- The MDA invited the Minister to support the funding application for the Regional Economic Diversification program
- The MDA notified the Department that the Board considered Minister Pavey’s request that we facilitate or host community level meetings with key councils and community leaders across South Australia. Board recommended that the Minister establish a joint approach with Minister Spiers, and that the MDA would be pleased to identify key personnel and community leaders.
- The MDA also enquired as to what the NSW Department is asking of Queensland in relation to the “First Flush Flows”.

**4. Discussions with Adam O’Bied – Advisor – Minister Anthony Lynham Water Minister for QLD**

- Adam O’Bied will be emailing a zoom calendar invite to discuss preparations of the written response to the letter sent to the Minister in relation to National Water Infrastructure – feasibility investment
- The MDA also discussed NSW section 324 orders and whether QLD have the same.

**5. Memberships**

The MDA have reached out to the [Cowra Council](#) to investigate the Council’s position in their consideration of joining the MDA as members.

A presentation to Council was conducted by Cr Phyllis Miller (R10) Chair and CEO.

Paul Devery has advised that a report to the Council will be completed by the end of the month

**6. 2020 76<sup>th</sup> National Conference – Shepparton – Victoria**

Venues have been secured for the [Conference](#) and [Gala Dinner Event](#).

Logistics for the Study Tour to Barmah are currently underway with the committee meeting monthly to further discuss such topics as Theme, Presenters, sponsors and exhibitors.

**7. ONE Basin Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Roadshow**

The ONE Basin CRC is a focused collaboration bid to develop policy, technical and financial solutions that support Basin communities, business and governments to understand and reduce their exposure to climate, water and environmental threats. The Australian Government’s Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community.

**8. Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists**

The MDB Roundtable presents an opportunity for communities, businesses and scientists to come together to address the serious water problems. Options for addressing many of the immediate and long-term water security and river health challenges, with fundamental actions could be readily implemented with widespread benefits.

**9. First Nation Peoples**

The MDA reached out to the newly formed National Indigenous Australian Agency based in Shepparton to establish and re-connect with the local Indigenous groups in the region. NIAA, previously known as the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, Indigenous Affairs group, welcomed the MDA executive and have subsequently provided contact details for the Yorta Yorta Nations, as well as names to assist with the logistical preparations for the 2020 76<sup>th</sup> National Conference.

NIAA, have indicated their support of the BCLP program and will disseminate details and correspondences throughout their networks.

**10. Employee Entitlements**

The future cost to the MDA of employee entitlements is increasing steadily. A separate bank account has been initiated to hold all accrued entitlements. The account “Employee Entitlements” will be managed in accordance with standard practices.



**Emma Bradbury**

**Chief Executive Officer**

# MDBA

Deana Mildren

Regional Engagement Officer



Australian Government



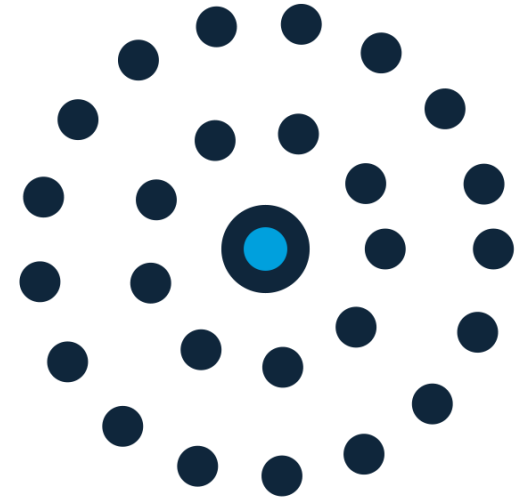


# Acknowledgement of Country

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) pays respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin.

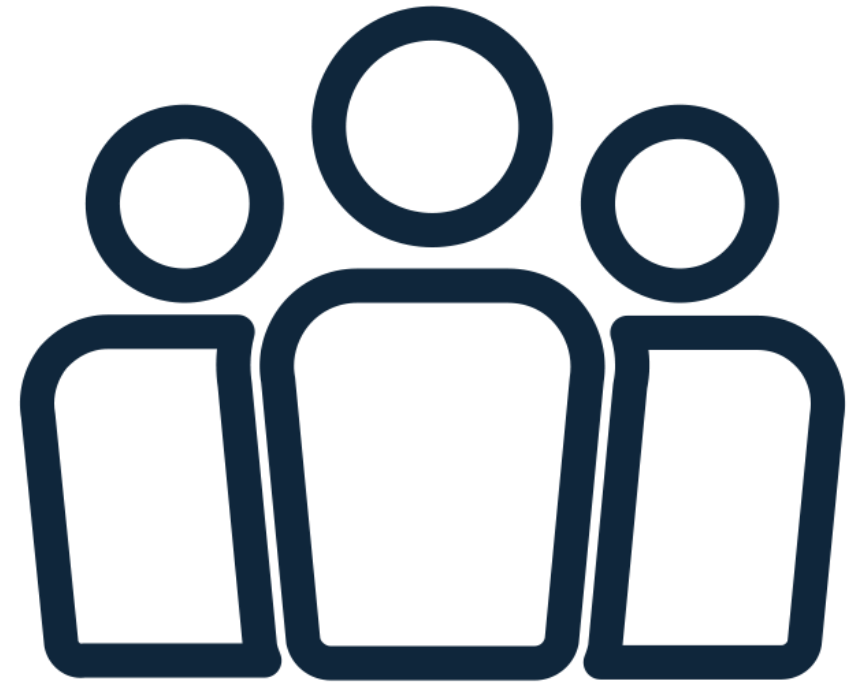
We acknowledge their deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters.

The MDBA understands the need for recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural values in natural resource management, associated with the Basin.



# Who does what

- New Minister - Keith Pitt
- The MDBA
- Basin state governments
- Department of Agriculture and Water and the Environment
- ACCC
- Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder



# Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

Responsible for;

- **managing** holdings
- protecting or restoring the environmental assets of the Murray-Darling Basin.
- consistent with the *Water Act 2007* and Basin Plan's Environmental Watering Plan
- How .....?



Use it.



Hold on  
to it.



Trade it for equal  
or greater  
environmental benefit.

# **Murray Darling Basin Authority and Basin Community Committee Update.**

# Murray Darling Basin Authority and Basin Community Committee (BCC)



## Authority met 12 February

- Communique available

## • Basin Community Committee met 13 & 14 February

- New Chair - Phil Duncan just completed a brief Southern Basin tour and visited the Lower Murray 9 & 10 February

# Rainfall

- Variable falls predominantly outside of the Basin
  - Some parts of ACT up to 100mm
  - Broken Hill received less than 10mm
  - 0-23mm in the Hume catchment
- Minor flooding has been recorded in the Paroo, Macintyre, Condamine and Moonie rivers in southern Queensland.
- Likely that between 100 and 200mm are needed to make up the soil moisture deficit in parts of the Basin.



# Rainfall in the Northern Basin

## QLD

- WRPS's are all accredited in Qld and the rules are working to protect flows – water users are not allowed to take until an announcement is made.
- Qld collaborating with the use of satellite imagery to assist with on ground compliance

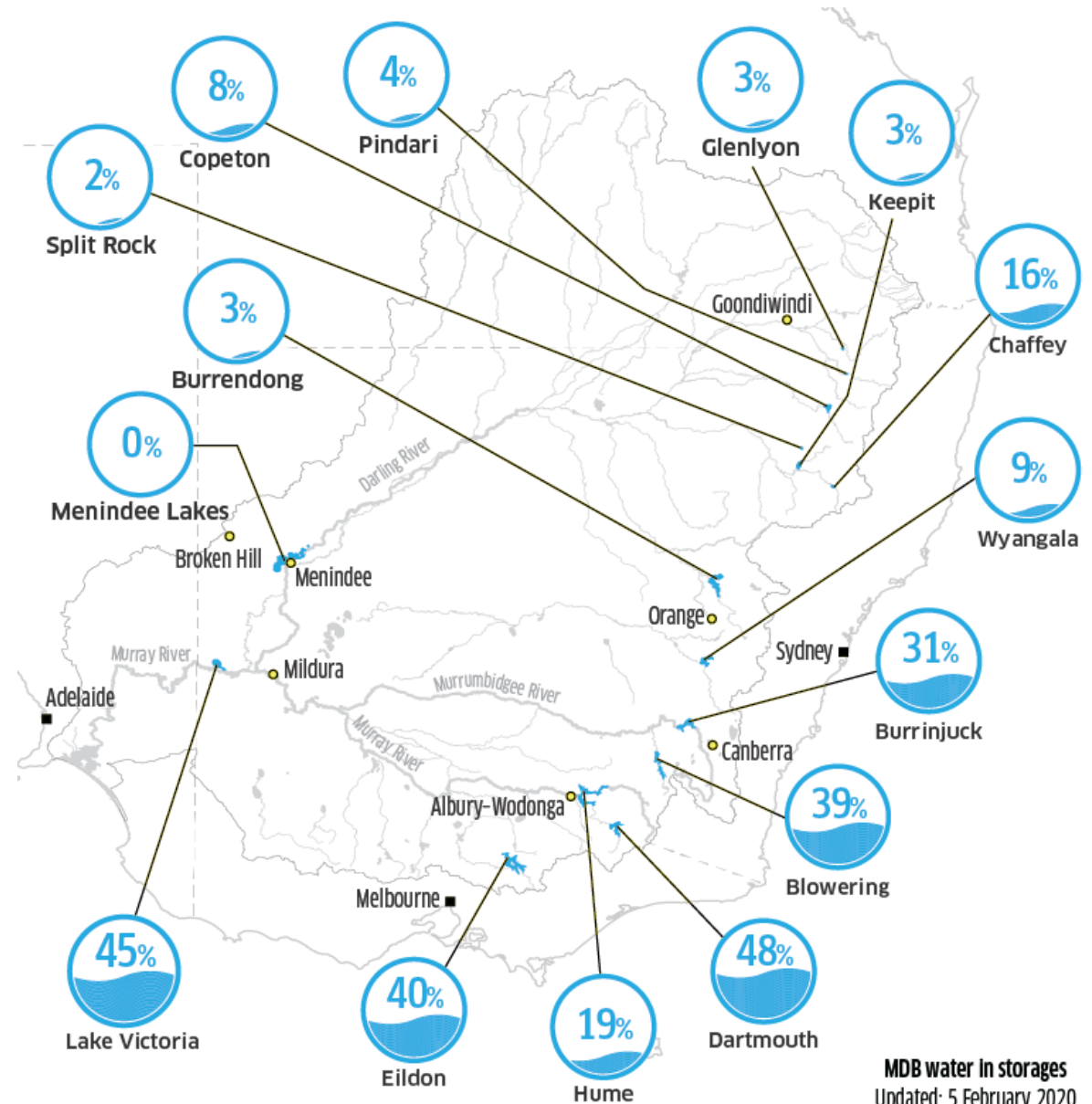
# Rainfall in the Northern Basin

## NSW

- Section 324 notices issued by NSW Gov to prevent widespread water take
- Some areas had a temporary lifting of prohibition of take to reduce impact on infrastructure
- NSW Gov do not expect that the limited local take will materially impact on downstream flow targets

# Water in storage

- includes some recent inflows but not all



<https://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/drought-murray-darling-basin/murray-darling-basin-drought-update>

MDB water in storages  
Updated: 5 February 2020

# Water Quality

## Key facts



Bushfires can impact water quality immediately and for many years. The impacts can vary greatly in different areas.



Turbidity (amount of suspended matter) and a change in water chemistry can have significant consequences for aquatic animal and plant life.



Rainfall after a fire can trigger **blackwater**-like events as ash and other materials wash into waterways, impact on fish, animals and town water supplies.



Check with your local water supplier or state government regarding your local water quality, following a bushfire.

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/water-quality/bushfires-water-quality>

# Office of the Inspector General

28 February 2020



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# Office of the Inspector General

- Website [www.igmdb.gov.au](http://www.igmdb.gov.au)
- Northern Basin Commissioner
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year report
  - <https://www.igmdb.gov.au/media/5>
- Water Sharing Investigation

# Water Sharing Investigation

- Inflows and supply into the Murray–Darling Basin.
- Delivery of water.
- Water sharing.
- Potential opportunities for enhancement.

Langhorne Creek Community Meeting

Tuesday 3 March 2020

10-11am

Langhorne Creek Sports Club

Email to register your interest: [igmdb@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:igmdb@agriculture.gov.au)

- Reports to the Minister in March 2020

# ACSEES Lower Lakes Investigation

# ACSEES – investigation into Lower Lakes

## Review

- Science
  - History
  - Current management
  - Policies
- [www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/monitoring-evaluation/lower-lakes-independent-science-review](http://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/monitoring-evaluation/lower-lakes-independent-science-review)
- **Panel Members**
    - Dr Francis Chiew (Chair)
    - Ms Jennifer Hale
    - Dr Michael Reid
    - Dr Klaus Joehnk
    - Dr Ian Webster



# ACCC Water Market Inquiry

28 February 2020

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# ACCC Water Market Inquiry

- Investigation of all options, transparency, efficiency, ways to enhance the market and regulation.
- Regional meetings have been completed
- Interim report in May 2020.
- Final report by 30 November 2020.



# Regional Offices

## Subscribe for regular updates:

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/river-information/weekly-reports>

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/stakeholder-newsletter>

## Deana Mildren

Lower Murray Regional Engagement Officer

[Deana.Mildren@mdba.gov.au](mailto:Deana.Mildren@mdba.gov.au)

Ph: 0437 047 123



Australian Government



# Questions



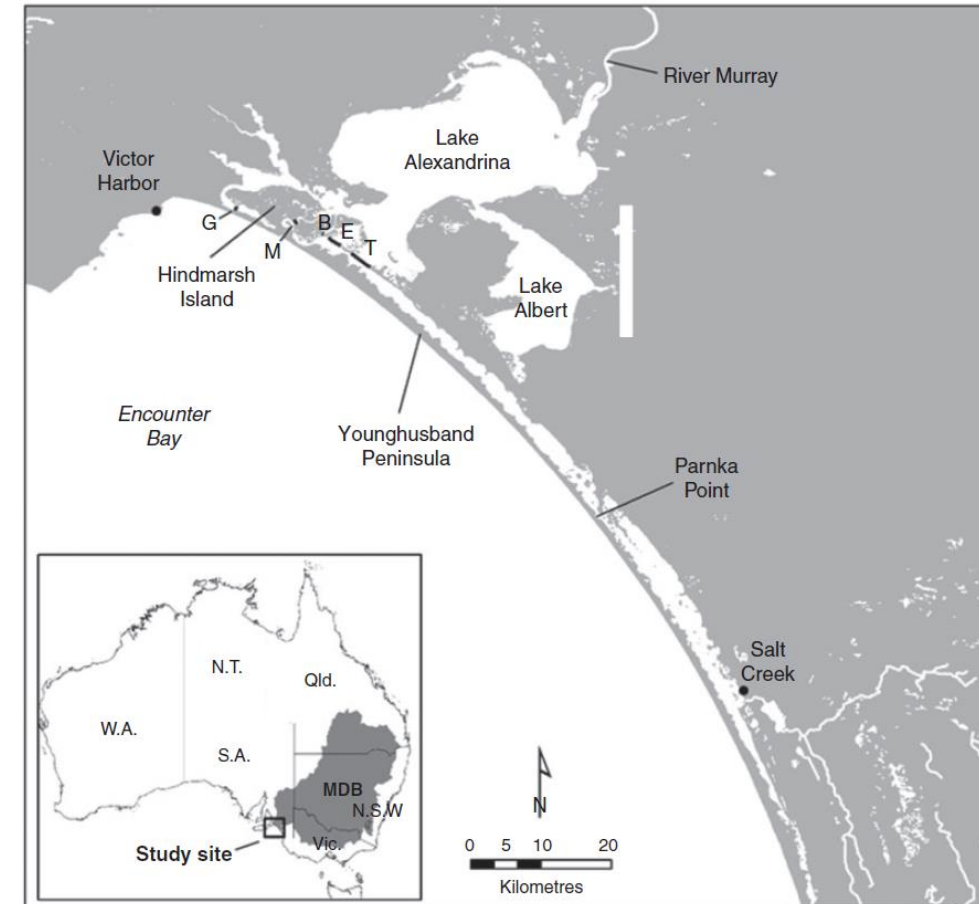
# Motivation for MDBA's review of Coorong, Lower Lakes, Murray Mouth management

Dr. Tariq Laattoe



# Background

1. Termination of the Murray Darling Basin
  - Where flows meet the Southern Ocean
  - Very flat – system loses a lot of energy
  - System of channels connect lakes to mouth
2. Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and Coorong
  - Coorong separated by paleo-shoreline
  - Barrages installed in 1940
  - Lakes fresh – Coorong salty
3. Ramsar listed site
  - Commitment to preserving it
  - International recognition as unique
  - Culturally significant



Basin Plan roll-out

The Basin Plan

## The Lower Lakes Independent Science Review

1. What are the various scientific perspectives on the past and current hydrology and salinity of the Lower Lakes and how have the lakes come to be managed in the way they are?
2. What would be the likely regional social, environmental and economic implications of removing the barrages, and would this result in significant water savings?
3. What knowledge needs are required to plan for the main social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities of the Lower Lakes to climate change?

Social and economic conditions in the Basin

2017 Basin Plan Evaluation

Water recovery in the southern Basin

barrages, and would this result in significant water savings?

3. What knowledge needs are required to plan for the main social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities of the Lower Lakes to climate change?

The independent experts will review and synthesise existing scientific and technical information and will consult with key researchers and identified stakeholders to understand the full range of views.



## Motivation

- barrage flows of at least 2000 GL year<sup>-1</sup> with a three-year rolling average of 95% of the time and a long-term minimum of 600 GL year<sup>-1</sup>;
- water levels in the lower lakes to be above sea-level and at +0.4 AHD (Australian Height Datum) 95% of the time;
- salinity in the lower lakes to be less than 1000  $\mu\text{S cm}^{-1}$  95% of the time and less than 1500  $\mu\text{S cm}^{-1}$  all the time;
- the Murray River mouth to be open 90% of the time to an average depth of 1 m (Murray Darling Basin Authority 2014, pp. 23, 24).

**KEEPING IT FRESH**

Gell, P. A., (2019) Watching the tide roll away – contested interpretations of the nature of the Lower Lakes of the Murray Darling Basin. *Pacific Conservation Biology*, CSIRO Publishing.

## Why fresh?

“Flood waters needed to drive out the salt water”

– Honourable Jon Rankine 1887

High levels of abstraction for irrigation made the Lakes salty *“for the first time”*

- anecdotal observation made 1901

Barrages installed

– 1940

Ramsar convention told that Lower Lakes are fresh

- 1985

All subsequent work focused on maintaining Lakes as a freshwater system

- large environmental flow commitment



# Why not salty?

1. Paleolimnological Evidence
  - Diatoms suggest Lakes are estuaries
2. Diatoms
  - Algae – dust like
  - Usually the first type of algae to grow
  - Lots of different types
  - Specific water conditions for certain types
3. Layered in a sequence
4. Dated up to 7000 years ago



# Controversy

1. Fluin (2002) and Fluin et al. (2007)
  - Estuary – can be salty at times
2. Fluin et al. (2009)
  - Predominantly Fresh
  - No new evidence
3. Helfensdorfer et al. (2019)
  - Strong evidence for estuary
  - Sea level control
4. Gell (2019)
  - Wrote the book on using diatoms in Lakes
  - Extensive studies in Coorong
  - Lower Lakes estuary



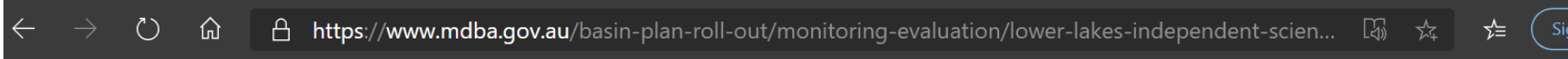


# Professor Peter A. Gell raises hell

1. “Watching the tide roll away...” – (2019)
2. Both SA Gov and MDBA are ignoring white literature in favour of grey.
  - White – peer reviewed science
  - Grey – reviewed?
3. Fresh Lower Lakes
  - Based on anecdotal evidence
4. Strong evidence for estuary
  - Several papers and reports – all previously ignored
5. Very strong argument against the barrages



# MDBA website



- Basin Plan roll-out
- The Basin Plan
- Water resource plans
- Sustainable diversion limits
- Compliance and enforcement
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Independent assessment of social and economic conditions in the Basin
- 2017 Basin Plan Evaluation

2. What would be the likely regional social, environmental and economic implications of removing the barrages, and would this result in significant water savings?
3. What knowledge needs are required to plan for the main social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities of the Lower Lakes to climate change?

The independent experts will review and synthesise existing scientific information and will consult with key researchers and identified stakeholders.

Some of the many studies that will be reviewed include:

- Bourman R 2019. Watching the tide roll away – contested interpretations of the nature of the Lower Lakes of the Murray Darling Basin.
- Hancock G 2007. Paleolimnological evidence for the independent nature of the terminal lakes, the Murray Darling Basin, Australia.
- Helfensdorfer A, Power H and Hubble T 2019. Modelling Holocene analogues of coastal plain estuaries reveals the magnitude of sea-level threat.
- Lester R, Fairweather P and Higham J 2011. Determining the environmental water requirements for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region.
- Phillips W and Muller K 2006. Ecological character of the Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland of international importance.

The Review team is expected to publish their report in Q2 2020.

• Gell, P 2019. Watching the tide roll away – contested interpretations of the nature of the Lower Lakes of the Murray Darling Basin.



# Independent review question 1: Your thoughts

1. What are the various scientific perspectives on the past and current hydrology and salinity of the Lower Lakes and how have the lakes come to be managed in the way they are?

## Independent review question 2: Your thoughts

2. What would be the likely regional social, environmental and economic implications of removing the barrages, and would this result in significant water savings?



## Independent review question 3: Your thoughts

3. What knowledge needs are required to plan for the main social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities of the Lower Lakes to climate change?

# Thanks for your attention



## WATER SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE

We need to take an overarching view of the water supply requirements for the MDBP and general irrigation west of the Great Dividing Range in Australia.

In 1938 the Bradfield Scheme was suggested by an Australian engineer John Bradfield renowned for overseeing the design and building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The new Bradfield Scheme proposes moving floodwaters from the North to the South by way of gravity through tunnels under the range down into the Warrego.

Water would be available to irrigate around 80,000 sq.kms. of black soil plains to the South and West of Hughenden with one estimate is that it would take a decade to complete and I guess that depends on who is responsible for the contract.

This project would I believe help solve the issue of water for the Murray Darling river system.

While we can debate the short term solutions however we need to address the longer term position of essential water for people and livestock.

The importance of water should be given a priority by political parties who have been asleep at the wheel for decades. This amply illustrated by the fact that the C.W.A. in N.S.W. called for the enlargement of the Wyangala Dam in 1960 and now the present N.S.W. Government in conjunction with the Federal Government has announced the fast tracking of the Wyangala dam and other dam projects in October 2019.

When was the last time we built a new dam in S.A. or increased the capacity of an existing one?

In 1969 the Kangaroo creek Dam the only structure to dam the flow of the river Torrens and the on-stream Kangaroo Creek Reservoir was commissioned.

We need to take the positive steps for water security for the future of our great country.

Cr. Robin Coleman  
Executive Member MDA Region 7  
City of Tea Tree Gully  
Mobile: 0412139773

6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.