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**MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC.  
REGION 9 ORDINARY MEETING  
TO BE HELD IN-PERSON OR LINK ON  
FRIDAY 28 JULY 2023 AT 10.00AM**

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**1 Attendance**

1.1 Apologies

**2 Introduction and Acknowledgment of Country - Chair Glen Andreazza**

**3 Declarations of Interest**

**4 Minutes and Business Rising from the Minutes**

4.1 Previous Minutes from MDA Region 9 Meeting on 5 May 2023  
(see attached)

**5 Reports & Board Minutes**

5.1 CEO Report + Website: [CEO Report-AUGUST-2023](#)

5.2 MDA Newsletters and Board Meetings refer Website: [MDA Reports](#)

**6 Items:**

6.1 Motion for 2023 Conference (For Information - dated 2 Jun 2023,  
attached)

**7. Action List (Refer Attached)**

**8 General Business**

**9 Proposed next Meeting**

Date?

Zoom Details:

<https://griffith-nsw.gov-au.zoom.us/j/82843046313?pwd=eEITQTZGbVhoSnd1dldSUUnV6OU0wUT09>

Passcode: 315593

Webinar ID: 828 4304 6313

Murray Darling Association Inc. | 28 July 2023



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## MINUTES

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**MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION (MDA) INC.  
REGION 9 ORDINARY MEETING  
HELD IN PERSON/VIA ZOOM FRIDAY, 5 MAY 2023 AT 10.00AM**

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### **PRESENT**

Chair Cr Glen Andreazza (Deputy Mayor), GM Brett Stonestreet, Griffith City Council; Cr Jenny Clarke, Narrandera Shire Council; CEO Mark Lamb, MDA (Via Zoom); Tim Phillips, Communications Officer, MDA Head Office (via Zoom); GM Jackie Kruger (Leeton Shire Council via Zoom), Cr Geoff Chapman (Hay Shire Council via Zoom) and Anna Agostini Minute Secretary

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Mayor Doug Curran (Griffith City Council), Cr Gail Driscoll (Lockhart Shire Council), Bede Spannagle (Riverina Water) Mayor Ruth McRae (Murrumbidgee Council), GM John Scarce (Murrumbidgee Council), Cr Paul Smith (Leeton Shire Council), Cr Cameron Lander (Narrandera Shire Council), Paul Maytom.

### **2 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

Chair Glen Andreazza welcomed Members and offered an Acknowledgement of Country.

### **3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Chair Glen Andreazza indicated a Declaration of interest as an Irrigator and Customer of Murrumbidgee Irrigation and in respect of today's Presentation by Murrumbidgee Irrigation.

### **4 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the MDA Region 9 Meeting of 29 March 2023 were recommended and confirmed, having previously been circulated amongst the members.

#### **Business Arising from the previous Minutes:**

Chair Andreazza reiterated his point noted in the previous Meeting Minutes in regard to water that flows into the Ocean, following large rain events and not credited to any account.

Brett Stonestreet reiterated the point that this is a fundamental argument i.e. water that is not put to any extractive use and becomes water that has 'gone past and as it does, saturating areas'. This is a yield for the basin and with that there is a division of extractive use and the environment, balancing each other out.

As Chair and Brett both indicated this is water therefore that is not registered but should be credited to the environment. Added to this Chair indicated the concern around carbon credits and the flooding events that have affected the carbon credits.

Brett reminded that there needs to be an accountable measurement and scrutiny of the flows that occur and a crediting of the proper and rightful accounts.

Chair Andreazza suggested that there needs to be a presentation to the MDA Region 9 members from the MDBA or Water NSW. Perhaps the Federal or NSW Water Minister to be involved, regarding the rightful crediting of accounts and failure to do so.

MDA CEO Mark Lamb suggested that an open discussion with governments, etc or at least MDBA representatives to address Region 9 members. Chair suggested perhaps a multi-pronged approach to get the answers required regarding flows, etc. Mark indicated that he is presenting to the MDBA Ministerial Council in June 2023 and will hope to raise this/discuss with attendees then. The contact of Ministers to answer the concerns is supported by the Members.

Mayor McRae indicated that she and GM Brett Stonestreet would formulate a Motion to go to the 2023 MDA National Conference to highlight the issue around flows and accountability.

The contact with Ministers to answer the question is also recommended.

Region 9 members supported the drafting of a Motion to be put forward to the 2023 National Conference.

## **5.1 CEO'S REPORT**

Mark Lamb and MDA advocacy continues at Federal and State levels.

13 Motions at last year's 2022 MDA Conference were success

New MDA Website created with eCommerce feature.

Partnerships continue with CSIRO SQ and NSW as well as One Basin CRC.

2023 MDA National Conference from 25 September.

Chair added that Griffith Council has resolved to bid for 2024 MDA National Conference.

## **5.2 MDA BOARD MEETINGS**

MDA Board Meetings 2022 as per the Website are noted.

## **6 PRESENTATION**

By: Karen Hutchison A/CEO Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd and Jenny McLeod, Policy & Communication Manager, Coleambally Irrigation Co-Op Ltd

- Optimisation Projects are key
  - Need for new projects
  - Certain projects that even with more time to complete will not deliver on the outcomes expected by the target of 605Gl.
  - 287 Gl Water Recovery risk for NSW if targets not met
  - Water purchases to meet any shortfall are likely to come from irrigators
  - Brett Tucker, Blackwatch Consulting P/L Report conclusion : “Needs to be a Mixture” of
    - \* capacity to re-regulate in the upper Murrumbidgee,
    - \* improvement of existing storages,
    - \* new storages within Coleambally Irrigation footprint
    - \* review resource management and infrastructure in a dynamic way with better cooperation,
    - \* better manage the environmental outcomes.
  - Coleambally Irrigation, Murray Irrigation, Murrumbidgee Irrigation – actions taken:
    - \* Implement all approved SDL projects
    - \* Identify alternate projects
    - \* Request extend time frame for completion
- Efforts towards Murrumbidgee Optimisation
- \* Consulting
  - \* Increased re-regulation capacity
  - \* Improvements to existing off-river storage
  - \* Dynamic management
- Optimisation Project Approach is seeking Feasibility funding – so as to quantify environmental and operational benefits of enhanced storage and re-regulation capability in the mid-Murrumbidgee – thereby provide detail to support for business case.

Significant projects at risk and either not determined or supported. Brett Stonestreet acknowledged this and continued to add that for various reasons there has been advice of delays. Why aren't projects finished? If overseen by Bureaucracy it is a slow process and therefore this needs to be asked of those that are within the process, that are working towards these projects. Brett reminded that time is against all when account is taken of the Federal Minister's comments that Buybacks are on the table when it is finally determined that water targets have not been reached.

Question by Chair to today's presenters around the often proposed Lake Coolah dam project, taking account that MI and CI are against the proposed project, why is this so? MI representative responded that the Lake Coolah project is not within the study undertaken by Blackwatch Consulting P/L as it considered the past 20 years of projects and the Lake Coolah Project is one that would not give the return for the financial investment and besides other projects in unison would be quicker to implement and return a better outcome. Karen Hutchison said it is not so much a 'No' to the Lake Coolah project but there needs to be a consideration of all the possible projects, savings and opportunities.

Jenny McLeod, CI representative, indicated that opportunities are greatest with the smaller gains – with service for instance to environment and general operating service levels – so more marginal levels rather than larger scale storages.

Overall summary by MI and CI is that the projects need to be undertaken to protect regional communities.

Chair Andrezza supported the presentation today and commented that the Lake Coolah project/feasibility study should be considered as part of the MI and CI scope of projects.

Jackie Kruger, 605GI as total to be saved, concern over 190GI to 300GI delivered. Karen Hutchison indicated that the Murrumbidgee contribution/benefit is 162 GI of the 605GI. Any under-recovery of the SDL adjustment mechanism would be shared in proportion to the way the benefits were shared. So that is 162GI is approx. 35% and this would mean approx. 80 GI of wet water would be taken out of the Murrumbidgee Valley.

Jackie Kruger identified that the briefing paper received from MI/ CI related to the request for the feasibility funding – Jackie requested that a list be provided to indicate the options and substance that needs to be explored. Otherwise advocating for the \$4million is difficult to undertake. MI/CI provided a response but did not indicate any further detail in relation to this question would be provided.

Comment by Jackie that Steve Whan could be utilised for consultation, noting his close connection with understanding this region's water issues.

Ruth McRae asked for a key word document/summary that can be utilised when meeting with responsible representatives and advocating for the feasibility study discussed today.

Brett strongly raised that there needs to be detail available, provided by MI/CI, that is the full background of the request has not been provided. The pre-feasibility analysis and report that exists (Brett has a copy received in confidence from MI CEO Brett Harris) is considered by the presenters today to not adequately provide information that Councillors could use, but rather their presentation today is asked of the Region 9 members to "support in principle" MI/CI request for funding for a feasibility study.

Chair, Ruth McRae and Brett Stonestreet all asked for the information that exists be made available to Councillors. So regardless of whether the document is useful or not it should be available. Chair highlighted the need for background information, so as to be fully prepared should the questions be directed to Councillors who are advocating the funding.

MI/CI both acknowledged that a document will be provided that will assist a more articulated and informed position with substantiation to assist a more confident advocacy of the funding request.

Jenny Clarke asked of the MI representative as to whether MI support the Lake Coolah Project. Response was that in isolation the Project is difficult to support however within a whole of system approach it would be supported by MI. Karen Hutchison indicated that the project alone would be costly and would take water out of the system separate to the allocation process.

Post Presentation discussion: Brett reiterated and shared his frustrations that there is a copy of the document just discussed that he received from the CEO of MI, in confidence and therefore not circulated to anyone else. It is unfair therefore to expect that the document not be forwarded on to the Councillors who will on the balance and in the best interests of the community, advocate for the requested feasibility study presented today.

Note is made by the Region 9 Members today that MI/CI have indicated they will provide a document providing the requisite information that will assist them and Councillors to articulate and substantiate any/their argument to Government and the wider community for a feasibility study.

Jackie suggested that perhaps there may be irrigation peak bodies/ stakeholders that are not aware of the 605 GI and SDLAM projects and what MI/CI have planned. They perhaps need to be informed.

## **7 GENERAL BUSINESS**

Jackie highlighted that Community has sent a message that strong advocacy needs to be made to next Ministerial Council meeting.

Jackie added that the Riverina Murray Development Plan has for the first time included water Recognising its importance to the Region and therefore part of land use planning.

## **8 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is to be held 28 July 2023 at 10am. That meeting will be open to all Members to attend in-person if they wish to do so. Otherwise a Zoom link will be made available to those that would prefer that way of joining the meeting.

Close 11.50am

# Murrumbidgee Optimisation - MDA Region 9

*Karen Hutchinson, CEO A/g  
Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd*



*Jenny McLeod, Policy & Communication Manger  
Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Ltd*



# Basin Plan



Productive water ↓ (2750GL)

Local and shared recovery targets

Some over recovery

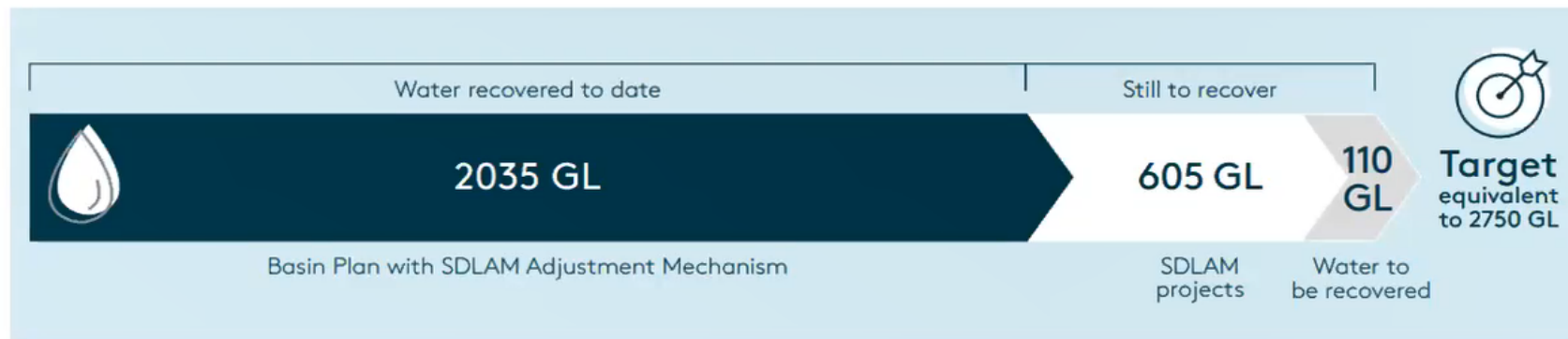
- **SDLAM** – adjusts the recovery target
- Northern Basin Tool Kit
- 1500GL cap on buy back
- Factor adjustment

98% there (on paper)

Reconciliation **2024**



# What is SDLAM?



Sustainable **D**iversion **L**imit **A**djustment **M**echanism

# Why do we care?



# What are we doing about it?



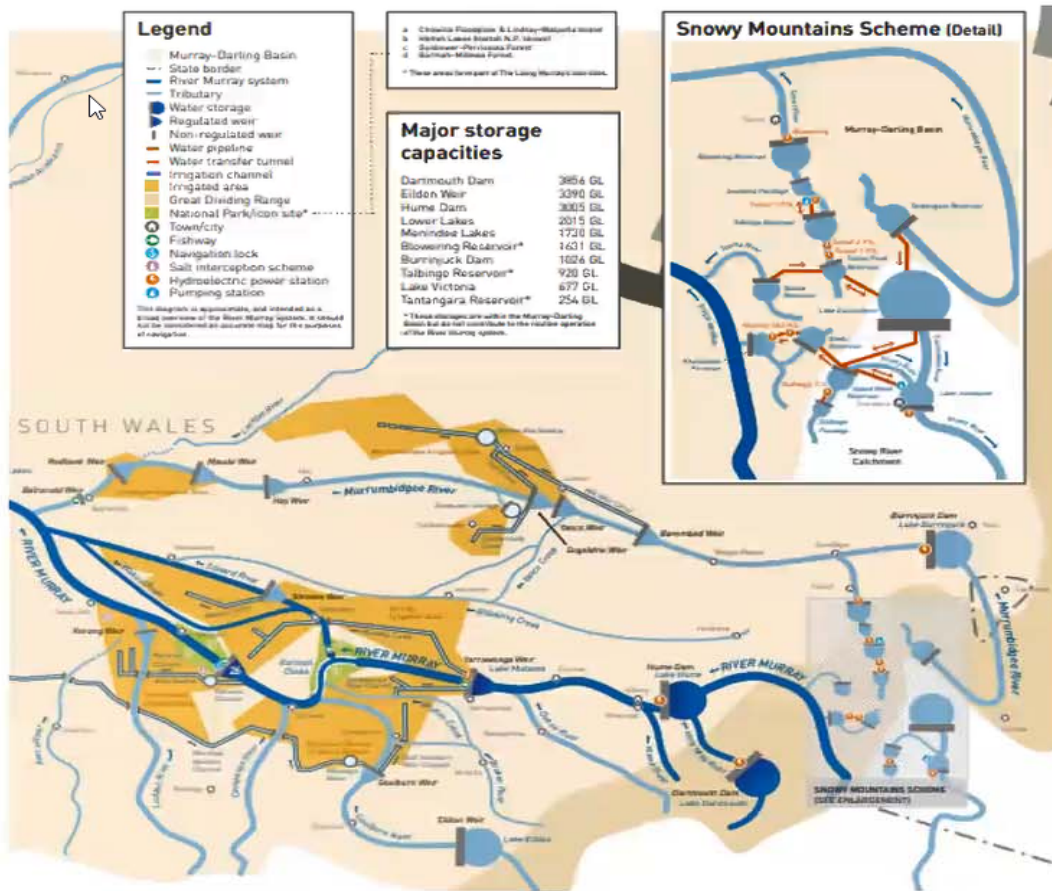
[colyirr.com.au](http://colyirr.com.au)  
[murrayirrigation.com.au](http://murrayirrigation.com.au)  
[mirrigation.com.au](http://mirrigation.com.au)

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*A joint awareness campaign produced by Coleambally Irrigation, Murray Irrigation and Murrumbidgee Irrigation.*

- Implement all approved SDL projects
- Identify alternate projects
- Extend time frame for completion

# Murrumbidgee Optimisation



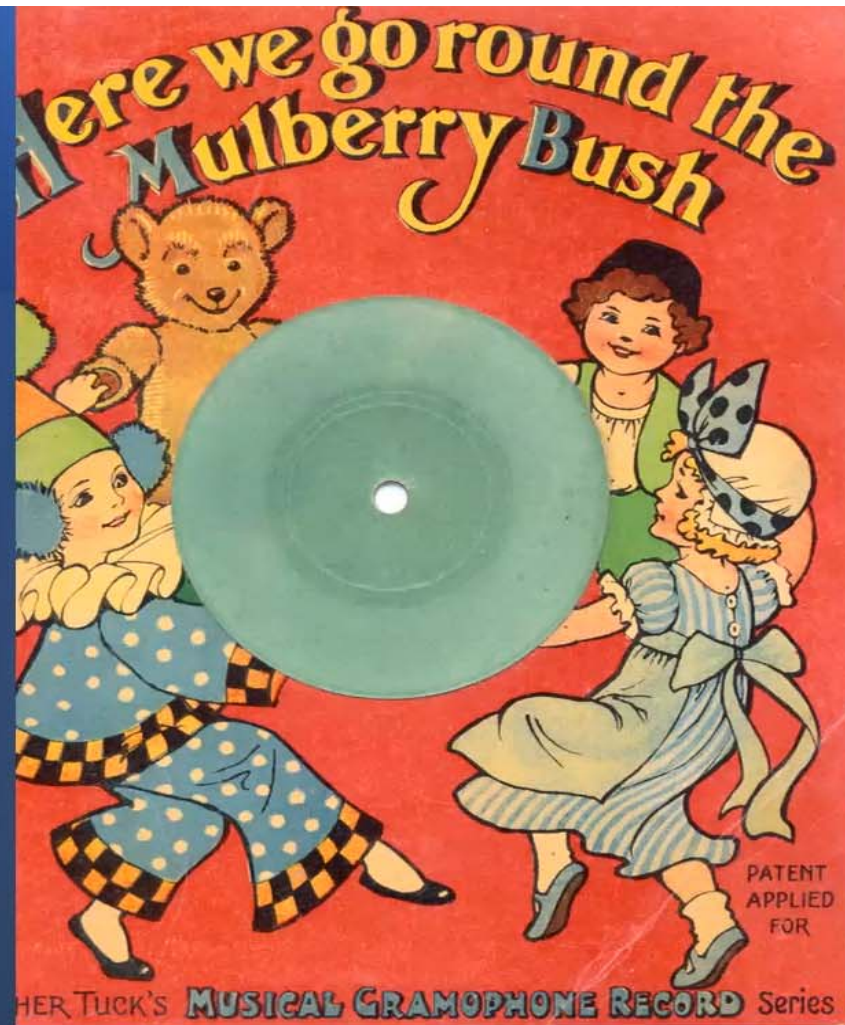
- ✓ Blackwatch consulting
- ✓ Increased re-regulation capacity
- ✓ Improvements to existing off-river storages
- ✓ Dynamic management

## Specifically we are seeking:

- **Feasibility funding (c.\$4M)** to quantify environmental and operational benefits of enhanced storage and re-regulation capability in the mid-Murrumbidgee
- This work will provide the detail needed to support moving to a **business case**



The Response  
so far...



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# HELP

- ✓ Raise your **voices** in the conversation
  - ✓ Ask **WHY** is NSW government not supporting projects
  - ✓ Tell them that there are SDL projects **AND** water savings projects
  - ✓ Extend the **time** for completion
-



2 June 2023

Mr Mark Lamb  
CEO  
Murray Darling Association Inc.

e: m.lamb@mda.asn.au

Dear Mark,

**REGION 9 - MOTION TO MDA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 25 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

At the last meeting of the Murray Darling Association Region 9 held Friday 5 May 2023 it was resolved:

That the Murray Darling Basin Association Region 9 submit a motion to the 2023 Annual Conference of the Murray Darling Association to be held 25 to 28 September 2023 regarding "Unregulated Flows".

**Motion: Murray Darling Basin Plan – Unregulated Flows:**

That the Murray Darling Association write to the Minister for the Environment and Water Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP:

1. Seeking an explanation of the methodology governing "Unregulated Flows" in the Murray Darling Basin.
2. Seeking an explanation as to why "Unregulated Flows" that remain in the River system are not recognized as "Environmental Flows".
3. Requesting that the methodology governing "Unregulated Flows" be amended such that flows that remain in the River System during unregulated flow periods be measured and recorded as "Environmental Flows".

**Background Comments:**

The wet weather period during 2020/22 was a multi-year La Nina event which resulted in enormous flows through the Murray Darling Basin. Significant periods of time were declared as "Unregulated Flows". During periods of "Unregulated Flows", consumptive users are authorised to extract water from the river system without that water being charged against their licence allocation.



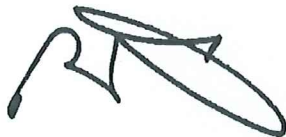
Likewise, any "Unregulated Flow" water that flows down the river system during the same period is not charged against the "environmental water" allocation.

In reality, only a very small proportion of "Unregulated Flows" is extracted by consumptive users during such events therefore the vast majority of the water stays within the river system and eventually passes through the system and out to sea.

These flows through to the sea provide substantial environmental benefits but are not currently charged or debited against the environmental water account/allocation.

This Motion seeks to have the methodology for "Unregulated Flows" amended to require water that remains in the river system to be charged against the environmental water account/allocation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brett Stonestreet', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**BRETT STONESTREET**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

## Action List for MDA Region 9 – 2023

MEETING DATE	TOPIC	ACTION REQUIRED	TO UNDERTAKE ACTION	UPDATE
29/3/2023	Reconciliation of current Status of water recovery across the Basin – for 450GI at the Federal Level or the 605GI which is the SDL recovery split between states	Region 9 members requested that at the MDA Board meeting on 3 April 2023 – the Board be requested to forward a letter to Federal Minister for Water, Tanya Plibersek MP to request such a reconciliation	Chair Andreazza/ CEO MDA Mark Lamb	
5/5/2023	Chair Andreazza suggested that there needs to be a presentation to the MDA Region 9 members from the MDBA, Water NSW, perhaps the Federal or NSW Water Ministers: Re: 1. Reconciliation of water accounts 2. Unregulated flows 3. 450GI and 605GI targets	In due course – MDBA and/or Federal Minister and/or NSW Minister to address MDA Region 9 members at a meeting or event. CEO MDA Mark Lamb to invite representatives to future Region 9 meeting or event. Mark attending MDBA Ministerial Council in June 2023 and will attempt to raise this at that event and potential invite be extended to Federal/State Govt attendees.	CEO Mark Lamb	
5/5/2023	Motion to go to the 2023 MDA National Conference to highlight the issue around flows and accountability.	Mayor McRae indicated that she and GM Brett Stonestreet would formulate the Motion.	GM Brett Stonestreet/ Mayor Ruth McRae	Letter completed with Motion for Conference included. Forwarded to CEO MDA on 6 Jun 2023 (copy attached to Agenda Region 9 for meeting on 28 Jul 2023)
5/5/2023	Presentation & Request by MI/CI for MDA and Councillor advocacy for application by MI/CI for Optimisation feasibility funding (c.\$4m)	Following debate on available/unavailable information - MI/CI presenters indicated they would provide a document that will assist a better articulation, a more informative and further substantiation to assist MDA and Councillors advocacy when communicating with Government or Media.		