



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

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## Region 6 Ordinary Meeting Number

<b>Location:</b>	Alexandrina Council Community Chambers "Wal Yuntu Warrin", 11 Cadell Street, Goolwa
<b>Time/date:</b>	Post AGM, 11.30am – 3.00pm, Friday 15 February 2019
<b>Guest Speakers:</b>	<b>Angus MacGregor</b> , Manager - Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin (DEW) <b>Monique White</b> , Assistant Director – Engagement (MDBA) <b>Michelle Campbell</b> , Local Engagement Officer (Cwlth Environmental Water Holder) <b>Deana Mildren</b> , new Regional Engagement Officer, Lower Murray (MDBA)
<b>Chair:</b>	Councillor Melissa Rebbeck
<b>Executive Officer:</b>	Tracey Strugnell, Coorong District Council

## MINUTES

### 1. WELCOME

### 2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

#### 2.1 Present:

**Apologies:** Tony Wilson (Rural City of Murray Bridge), CEO Anne Champness, Councillor Miles Hannemann (Tatiara District Council), Adrian Pederick (Member for Hammond), Andrew MacDonald (Kingston District Council), Faith Coleman, Peter Mettam (DEW), Professor Mike Young (University of Adelaide), Councillor Tracy Hill (Coorong District Council).

**VOTING MEMBERS:** Heather Barclay, Mayor Brenton Lewis (Rural City of Murray Bridge), Councillor Vern Leng, Councillor Brenton Qualmann, (Coorong District Council), Councillor Michael Scott, Councillor Melissa Rebbeck, CEO Glen Rappensberg, (Alexandrina Council), Julie Barrie, Keith Loeser, Frank Tuckwell.

**NON VOTING MEMBERS:** Shen Mann (Alexandrina Council), Mayor Paul Simmons, CEO Vincent Cammell, Councillor Tank Arthur (Coorong District Council), Peter Smith, Lorraine Leese, Lesley Fisher, Steve Wilkinson, Bruce Brooks, Councillor Andrew Tilley (Chair Region 7 & Mitcham City Council), Geoff Gallasch.

### 3. HOUSEKEEPING

3.1 Welcome to all of our new Region 6 delegates. The content of today's meeting will serve as an update and induction for all ongoing and new members.

3.2 Housekeeping: safety, toilets and catering.

3.3 We will break for lunch at 1pm.

**4 WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF REGION 6**

**5 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

**6 MINUTES**

Minute check of the previous Information and Ordinary meetings held on December 14<sup>th</sup> and October 19<sup>th</sup> 2018 respectively– **Attachments A & B.**

Councillor Leng moved that the previous minutes meeting be accepted. Seconded by Keith Loeser. Passed.

**7 CORRESPONDENCE**

**INCOMING**

**Kingston District Council approach in regard to rejoining the MDA  
MDA funding support - Proposed motion for Councils**

Heather Barclay said this matter will go to the MDA Board on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. She suggested that each Council put a report up from this meeting in regard to this suggested motion CEO Glenn Barclay said that they would put a report to Alexandrina Council.

Councillor Vern Leng explained that this matter arose on the last day of the Strategic Planning Workshop at Echuca on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February.

Mayor Brenton Lewis suggested that Region 6 support the CEO's and delegates write a report to their Council to consider this motion. He urged that Councils be supportive, but to ask the Murray Darling Association what the fall back position is in regard to financial security of the organization.

**Approach from Andrew Lake of Pristine Forage Technologies to speak to Region 6**

Tracey Strugnell recommended that this approach be referred to the Region 6 Executive for discussion.

**Communique's from Murray Darling Basin Authority (forwarded on)  
Media Releases from Murray Darling Association (forwarded on)**

**OUTGOING**

**Executive Officer report on the Murray Darling Association Strategic Workshop – 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb  
Media Release: Murray Darling Basin Councils across four states meet to look forward - 6<sup>th</sup> Feb**

**8 BUSINESS ARISING**

**7.1 Action List – Attachment C**

Julie Barrie moved that completed Actions be removed from the list. Seconded Glenn Rappensberg. Passed.

Tracey Strugnell suggested that non completed items be reviewed and discussed at the next Region 6 Executive Meeting.

## 8. REPORTS

### 8.1 CEO's Report – via phone conference – covered during AGM

### 8.2 Executive Officer Report

- Ongoing discussion with partners in regard to Coorong Summit including Peter Mettam, Natural Resources SE, Friends of the Coorong. Hoping that the impetus to take this forward becomes clearer now that the \$70 million for the Coorong by Minister Speirs has been announced. Tracey Strugnell will communicate further with Angus McGregor (Manager - Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin) to discuss partnership opportunities.
- Distribution of announcements re Ministerial Council announcement re the Socio Economic impact, and \$70 million for the Coorong
- Media updates on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January and 11<sup>th</sup> of February
- Royal Commission into the Murray Darling Basin Plan distributed
- Invited to attend Murray / Mallee Drought Community Action Group with Mayor Paul Simmons (Coorong DC), ongoing
- Attendance of MDA Strategic Planning Workshop at Echuca/Moama February 1-3 2019
- Invited to attend State Water Price Inquiry Workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> of March.

Councillor Vern Leng moved that the Executive Officers report be accepted. Seconded Julie Barrie. Motion carried.

## 9. RELEVANT MEDIA

News updates 16th of January, and 11<sup>th</sup> of February – **Attachment E**

Are these updates of any value?

Executive Officer Tracey Strugnell asked the group if these updates were of any value, and invited member to send through any media articles that they would like included in the news updates.

## 10. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 10.1 Refresh, Update and Induction for Members of Region 6 Delegates Shen Mann

Revisit Strategic Planning process, outcomes, and status. **See Attachment F**

Revisit Communication Strategy process, outcomes, and status. **See Attachment G**

Name & Tagline Adopted: "Murray to Mouth: Working together to secure a freshwater future for the Lower Murray, Lakes & Coorong".

Chair Melissa Rebbeck asked what the process is for moving forward for the Strategic and Communications Plan. Shen Mann responded that this is up to the Region 6 Executive and Executive Officer to work on the delivery of this plan. This is not time limited.

Councillor Michael Scott asked the group whether Region 6 still want to give their full support to the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Keith Loeser added further comment to this.

CEO Glenn Rappensberg added that he felt the previous perspective had been that a Plan is better than no plan. We need to analyse whether the Plan is the issue, or the way it is being implemented. A key issue is however the lack of consideration of climate change.

Chair Melissa Rebbeck made comment on the climate change elements of the Royal Commission into the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Shen Mann suggested that we should listen to the perspectives of our guest speakers.

Mayor Brenton Lewis also backed Glenn Rappensberg's comments. He urged that Region 6 not walk away from the Murray Darling Basin Plan. That a plan, is better than no plan.

## 10.2 Discussion of Murray Darling Basin Strategic Planning Workshop

Heather Barclay, Councillor Vern Leng, Mayor Brenton Lewis, Tracey Strugnell

Item arising from MDA Strategic Planning Workshop, suggestion from Region 7 (City of Mitcham-Mayor Heather Holmes-Ross) that the South Australian Regions aim to meet quarterly.

Mayor Brenton Lewis commented that 12 Regions came together, with the overall feeling was the issues that united us were stronger than those that divided us. There was an acknowledgement of the need to improved the financial position of the Murray Darling Basin.

Heather Barclay said she took away that the Murray Darling Association is transforming and growing in strength in its ability to provide advocacy. 47% of the Councils in the Basin are MDA members. A key reflection was that we need to encourage more Councils, and our neighboring Councils to become members. A highlight was the SA Region representatives all met on the Sunday. This was a terrific opportunity to build relationships with neighboring Regions.

Executive Officer Tracey Strugnell thanked Coorong District Council, Rural City of Murray Bridge, and Alexandrina Council for providing the opportunity for her to attend the Strategic Planning Workshop.

## 10.3 MDA Inter Regional Meeting

### Connecting Catchments and Communities Menindee to the Murray Mouth

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2019 – Remark – **see Attachment H**

Who is attending from Region 6?

Topics for subsequent **MDA inter-regional forums** in the coming year include:

- Albury to Adelaide - exploring topics of inflows and urban water use, planning, flood management etc.
- Balonne to Broken Hill – exploring topics of irrigation in the Northern Basin, Barwon-Darling water sharing plan etc
- Moira to Mildura – exploring issues of constraints, management of the Barmah choke, impact of expanding the irrigation footprint to permanent plantings below The Choke, total capacity and supply obligations etc.

- Naran Lake to Nyngan – Managing the Macquarie Marshes – exploring the relationship between the irrigation, the SDLs and ephemeral wetlands of the interior.

#### 10.4 Schedule of Guest Speakers

Existing schedule of Guest Speakers to be reviewed at the next Region 6 Executive Meeting.

### 11 GUEST SPEAKERS – PANEL FORMAT

To assist with our Region 6 refresh and induction process Angus, Peter, Monique, and Michelle were invited along to introduce themselves and to explain their roles.

#### **Angus MacGregor, Manager - Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin (DEW)**

Angus introduced himself as the newly appointed Manager of the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin (HCHB) project. Angus explained his background, including in the administration of the CLLMM Recovery Project from 2011-2017. The Federal Government has quarantined \$70 million toward the Coorong, with \$2 million earmarked to progress and finalise an action plan.

Angus explained that Department for Environment and Water's (DEW) intention is to undertake a detailed consultation and planning process to identify the best options for the funding. This will commence over the coming weeks and months and DEW is open to suggestions about the best way to do this.

Angus discussed the Coorong Summit and the Goyder Report. These reports will inform the investment of the \$70 million, but Minister Speirs has also indicated a desire for grass-roots, community-led involvement.. The focus will be on the long-term health of the Coorong, with a focus on the Southern Lagoon.

A range of sub-projects are likely to be developed under the HCHB umbrella, including:

- Research and investigations; On-ground works;
- Operational tools and systems;
- Feasibility investigations of large infrastructure solutions;
- Aboriginal partnerships; and Community engagement and capacity building

Councillor Vern Leng asked Angus about whether funding the use of desalination plant was coming out of the \$70 million? Angus said it is not.

Mayor Brenton Lewis asked about where the \$70 million figure came from? Angus explained that the figure was the approximate balance of the \$610 million State Priority Project funding commitment made in 2008.

Councillor Brenton Qualmann asked what the time frame is for the delivery of the \$70 million projects? Angus explained that the current end date for the project is 2024, however projects investigated as part of this project may be delivered beyond 2024.

Tracey Strugnell asked whether there was any likelihood of devolving of funding to other bodies such as the Coorong Tatiara Local Action Plan or Councils for the delivery of projects. Angus answered that community delivery was being considered.

Councillor Vern Leng asked whether the Lake Albert to Coorong Connector concept will be looked at through this project. Angus said that a number of large infrastructure concepts have been identified for potential feasibility investigation under the HCHB project, including the Lake Albert to Coorong Connector. Angus indicated that DEW is open to revisiting previously investigated

concepts, including that of a Connector, to undertake an objective assessment of their potential impacts on the Coorong.

Lorraine Leese asked about the Terms of Reference for the project. Angus explained that the final project scope / terms of reference for the project were still being developed, but that the focus will be on the ecological health of the Coorong, with a focus on the Southern Lagoon.

Councillor Brenton Qualmann asked what the time frame is for the delivery of the \$70 million projects? Angus answered that the current date for the project completion is 2024, however projects developed as part of this project may be delivered beyond 2024.

Tracey Strugnell asked whether there was any likelihood of devolving of funding to other bodies such as the Coorong Tatiara Local Action Plan or Councils for the delivery of projects. Angus answered that community delivery was being considered.

Councillor Vern Leng asked whether the Lake Albert to Coorong Connector concept will be looked at through this project. Angus said that this project will be looked at freshly under the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Project.

Lorraine Leese asked about the Terms of Reference for the project. Angus answered that the focus will be on the ecological health of the Coorong, with a focus on the Southern Lagoon.

### **Michelle Campbell, Local Engagement Officer (Cwlth Environmental Water Holder)**

Michelle explained her role and that of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). They can manage the water in three ways, use carryover, trade water and deliver/use water. The CEWH relies on the State Governments to deliver water. Water remains the responsibility of the States under Australia's Constitution Section 101.

The CEWH works in conjunction with many other bodies eg. Barrock Station, SA MDB NRM Board, Nature Foundation SA, and Renmark Irrigation Trust to deliver water for the environment. She explained that in the Southern Basin the delivery of water is simpler due to the range of structures, locks, regulators and volume of water held in large storages. This is more difficult in the Northern Basin. The aim is to release water in line with natural cues, or rainfall events.

Michelle explained that there is currently small volumes of water for the environment in the Darling system, making it difficult to help the fish kills. However there is sufficient water in the Murrumbidgee system to have a positive impact on the fish kills in this area.

Michelle was asked how are we going to mitigate blue green algal blooms and fish kills given it has been an issue in the Basin over such a long period of time.

Michelle answered that one of the tools we have where there is a re-occurring problem is the CEWH can sell water in a catchment where there is more than required, and buy water in the catchment where it is needed more.

Keith Loeser asked what happens when all of the states have exhausted their licences, is there a clear path from there?

Michelle said that there is a complex process that is entered into called 'special accounting' when South Australia's allocation cannot be met.

She reflected that it is now critical that local communities are very well informed about their local conditions, and are ready to debate intelligently and maturely with other basin dependent communities in other parts of the Basin.

**Monique White, Assistant Director – Engagement (Murray Darling Basin Authority)**

Monique spoke to the 450GL component. The change is around the socio economic consideration of projects that are developed for implementation.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority is preparing a report in response to the Royal Commission.

The Productivity Commission found that progress had been made in the implantation of the Basin Plan, and highlighted areas where progress was not occurring quickly. One of the key recommendations was that compliance be separated from the other areas of work of the MDBA.

The MDBA do not go out and check water meters or use, but they do oversee the States to ensure that they are doing this compliance work. The MDBA has identified that Water Resource Plans are at risk. Michelle explained that the States develop the Water Resource Plans which are then handed to the MDBA for assessment.

Monique reported that the MDB Plan did look at climate change over time, as will the Adaptive Water Resource Plans which are due for completion between June and December 2019.

Monique said the Sustainable Delivery Projects are going ahead to be delivered by 2024.

The Northern Basin initiatives are ongoing, but the 450 GL with the socio economic components may be difficult to implement.

Councillor Vern Leng asked whether given the current climate are the MDBA going back to the drawing board in regard to the Sustainable Diversion Limits.

Monique answered that in the Northern Basin the Groundwater and Water Resource Plans are currently being completed. Having input into these Plans during the consultation plan is important.

Chair Melissa Rebbeck asked “The Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO worked together on a report for the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which from memory showed a significant difference in rainfall decline and streamflow over the last 20 years for south eastern Australia. Has this been or can this be considered by the MDBP for their SDL and ESLF? “

Monique answered that the MDBP are working closely with CSIRO to enhance their knowledge in this area.

Councillor Peter Smith asked whether this group would like to write a letter of thanks to the past Chair of the MDBP Neil Andrew. Chair Melissa Rebbeck answered that this will be discussed at a meeting of the Region 6 Executive Group.

Michelle suggested that it may be of value to ask someone along to explain the new Water Connect Water Allocation Dash Board.

**Chair Melissa Rebbeck opened the floor to questions.**

Councillor Jeff Arthur made the comment that no new storage has been built in Australia in a very long time, except privately.

Monique said the work done privately is regulated by the States.

Lorraine Leese commented that the MDBP is a Plan in progress. Each State has their own water legislation as per the Commonwealth Constitution.

## **12 INTRODUCING**

**Deana Mildren**, new Regional Engagement Officer, Lower Murray (MDBA)

Deana introduced herself and suggested that it may be of value to invite a future guest speaker to discuss Water Allocation Plans.

## **13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **13.1 Murray Darling Association financial position**

Councillor Michael Scott raised that the MDA Executive should be promoting themselves to non member councils to improve their non financial position.

Mayor Brenton Lewis responded that the MDA Executive are currently not well enough resourced to carry out this work. He added that this needs to fall back to the Regions and individual Councils to speak to their neighbours.

Chair Melissa Rebbeck suggested that the issue of alternative funding sources be discussed at the Region 6 Executive.

### **13.2 Response to the Royal Commission on the Murray Darling Basin Plan**

Glenn Rappersberg asked what the Strategy is moving forward for a response to the Royal Commission. Does one response go up from the Murray Darling Authority, or from each individual Region.

Heather Barclay said this was discussed at the Strategic Planning Workshop. The position was that one position will go forward from the Murray Darling Association. That if Region 6 have points of view we should communicate these to Emma Bradbury.

Mayor Brenton Lewis suggested that the strategy for responding to the Royal Commission should become clearer at the next MDA Board Meeting.

Chair Melissa Rebbeck will ask CEO Emma Bradbury what the best process is for Region 6 to have input into the overall submission Murray Darling Association on the Royal Commission Report.

### **13.3 Paperwork**

Executive Officer Tracey Strugnell requested that consideration be given to moving to electronic copies of meeting documents hosted on one of the Council web sites. This will save a lot of paper and wastage. Tracey will report back to the Regional 6 Executive on the possible alternatives.

## **14 NEXT MEETING:**

Ordinary Meeting on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> of April - bought forward to the first Friday of the month, in the Coorong District Council Chambers, Railway Terrace – Taillem Bend.

## **15 CLOSE**



*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks Alexandrina Council for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 6 – Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong.*