

Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Region 1 Ordinary Meeting

Date: Friday 16 April 2021, Start Time: 10.30am
Location: Councillors Meeting Room, Albury City Council
Address: 553 Kiewa Street, Albury NSW 2640

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Cr David Thurley	AlburyCity Council – Chair Region 1
Cr Pat Bourke	Mayor - Federation Council
Cr Bernard Gaffney	Indigo Council
Cr David Wortmann	Mayor - Towong Shire
Andrew Lawson	Acting CEO – IP & E - AlburyCity Council
Emma Bradbury	CEO – MDA (via Zoom)

1.2 Apologies

Cr Kevin Mack	Cr Fred Longmire
Cr Jenny O'Connor	Frank Zaknich
Cr Greg Conkey	Cr van de Ven
Justin Clancy	Mark Dixon
Mark Verbaken	Charlie Bird
Adrian Butler	Brad Ferris

2. WELCOME & PURPOSE

Cr Thurley (Chair Region 1) welcomed members to the meeting and declared the meeting opened.

Moved: Cr David Wortmann **Seconded:** Cr Bernard Gaffney

Motion: That the apologies be accepted.

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

Moved: Cr Gaffney **Seconded:** Cr Wortmann

Motion: That the minutes of the Murray Darling Association Region 1 Meeting held on Thursday 4 February 2021 be accepted.

CARRIED

NB: At this point in time, **Item 7** was brought forward to enable the CEO Emma Bradbury to address the meeting by Zoom. The CEO then left the meeting.

4. STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF REGION 1

Cr Thurley spoke to the meeting regarding the membership of MDA and in particular Region 1. Discussions took place and it was decided that it would be sensible to review the historical boundaries and assess which Councils belong to Region 1.

Moved: Cr Thurley **Seconded:** Cr Bourke

Motion: That the Chair of Region 1 MDA send a request to the CEO of MDA requesting a review of the Membership of Regional as soon as possible.

CARRIED

5. CURRENT ISSUES FROM REGIONAL 1 COUNCILS

5.1 Albury – Cr Thurley

- The Murray Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan 2018 – 2023 was considered together with the proposed Victorian Government Plan to control feral horses in the Bogong National Park. Concerns were raised around the damage that horses and deer cause and the different handling of these pests by NSW and Vic Governments.
- Varying river heights is a real concern for those communities relying on the tourism industry – This will be an agenda item for the MDA Wentworth Conference.

5.2 Indigo – Cr Gaffney

- Indigo Shire is the only council in the MDA to have a Waterways activation plan.
- General discussion re river heights.
- Attended the Hume to Yarrawonga Waterway Management Advisory Group and felt it was very worthwhile.

5.3 Federation Council – Cr Bourke

- General discussion re the river height between Lake Hume and Mulwala. Federation Council believes that a weir would at Corowa would be worthy of investigation.

5.4 Towong – Cr Wortmann

- General discussion re Lake Hume activities

Moved: Cr Thurley **Seconded:** Cr Bourke

Motion: Region 1 ask the MDA to make representations to both relevant NSW and Victorian Ministers highlighting the issues about pest species control (in particular horses & deer) asking them to re-evaluate their current program (making note that aerial shooting is not satisfactory).

CARRIED

6. GUEST PRESENTATION

Nil. It was noted that if there were any suggestions for a guest speaker, please advise the Chair Cr Thurley.

7. CEO'S REPORT AND PRESENTATION

The CEO, Emma Bradbury gave an operational update, an overview of the key meetings, membership, conference details, engagement and the highlights over the last months.

Productivity Commission has been very engaging regarding Foreign owned water entitlements.

Funding is based on membership and in the last months submissions were made for over \$8 million.

Moved: Cr Thurley **Seconded:** Cr Wortmann
Motion: That the CEO's report and presentation be accepted. CARRIED

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 2021 National Conference 16-19 May, Wentworth Update

Website has all details – zoom capabilities but you still must register. There will be a tour of Menindee Lakes for those attending the Conference in person.

8.2 2022 National conference Regional 1 Submission

There has been 1 submission (AlburyCity) received for this Conference. The decision will be voted on this coming Monday 19 April.

8.3 MDA Projects Update and Opportunities

Emma provided this update in her report.

8.4 Delegates Report

Nil.

8.5 Other

There was general discussion regarding the Victorian State Government's decision to allow crown land that fronts streams and rivers to be accessed by the public for camping.

It has not been well received by farmers, however there was agreement that the decision has not been made clear and may be misunderstood by farmers and it would be most helpful if clear briefing papers were released.

Moved: Cr Wortmann **Seconded:** Cr Gaffney
Motion: Region 1 MDA notes its concerns regarding the proposed Victorian State legislation to allow crown land access to streams and rivers. CARRIED

9. FUTURE MEETING DATES

There will be meetings held in July and October (3rd Friday) – NB AlburyCity has council elections on 4 September.

10. CLOSE

Meeting closed at 11.49 am.

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks AlburyCity for arranging and hosting this meeting of Region 1.



Chief Executive Officer Monthly Report

April 2021

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

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1. Introduction

What a couple of months it has been! Floods, road closures, snap COVID lockdowns, we have experienced it all. Over the past three weeks, I have had the pleasure and the privilege of facilitating the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program workshop in Queensland and northern NSW, in collaboration with the award winning, inspirational leadership facilitator Julia Spicer.

I have met with and heard from some amazing participants, all deeply committed to the future of their communities and to developing the leadership skills and pathways.

We have worked with indigenous leaders looking to lead for change through stronger representation of Aboriginal people on local government. We have worked with industry leaders developing technologies that not only meet but exceed current regulatory standards in water management, compliance, and transparency. We have worked with young leaders preparing to speak their truth to power and lead their communities into a vibrant, prosperous, and connected future. Participants come into the course looking to lead in their local community and leave the course as local leaders in the Basin community, wanting to be part of the solution and committed to collaborative action.

All these people have inspired me, have put their best selves forward and have convinced me beyond any doubt that local leadership is, and must remain a national priority.

2. Key Meetings and Engagement

Date	Event/meeting	Location
12 – 19 February	Northern NSW Engagement Tour with Mayor Craig Davies, Narromine Council including meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ BROC meeting and Region 11 Meeting▪ Bogan Shire Council▪ Cobar Shire Council▪ Coonamble Shire Council▪ Warren Shire Council▪ Warrumbungle Shire Council▪ Coonabarabran Shire Council▪ Mid-Western Council	Inverell Nyngan Cobar Coonamble Warren Coonabarabran Mudgee
18 February	Floodplain Harvesting Rules in the Gwydir Valley - Southern Basin Representatives Consultation	Virtual
19 February	Meeting with DPIE NSW	Sydney
23 February	Meeting with Minister Pavey	Virtual
25 February	ONE Basin CRC Interview	Virtual
2 March	Meeting with Minister Keith Pitt and Senator Perin Davey	Deniliquin
1 March	National Conference Planning Meeting and scoping visit	Wentworth
10 March	Meeting with Murray River Council Mayor Chris Bilkey and General Manager Terry Dodds.	Echuca
12 March	MDBA Climate Resilience Summit with Cr David Thurley	Canberra
17 March	MDBA Stakeholder Dinner	Echuca
25 March	Meeting with Mayor McVeigh Western Downs Regional Council	Charleville
25 March	Productivity Commission Meeting - Register of Foreign-owned Water Entitlements	Virtual
26 March	Presentation to Darling Downs & SW Qld Council of Mayors Meeting	Charleville

29 March – 9 April	MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program Northern Basin Workshops	Cunnamulla Dirranbandi St George Collarenebri
6 April	Presentation to Namoi Unlimited Board Meeting	Virtual
15 April	MDBA Peak Groups Meeting	Virtual

3. Highlights

3.1 MDBA Climate Resilience Summit

National President David Thurley and I attended the MDBA Climate Resilience Summit in Canberra. The summit brought together an important array of community leaders representing interests as diverse as tourism (EcoTourism Australia) to crisis response and management (Red Cross Australia) to explore the challenges, priorities and responses to climate change, and the role of the MDBA in that space. The summit chair, Sir Angus Houston committed to reconvene the summit in 3 months for follow up on actions and look at “where to from here”.

3.2 Funding Opportunities

MDA Strategic Plan Vision 2025 – Pillar 4 - Corporate Development commits to ensuring our organisation is financially sustainable and corporately robust. The strategic objectives relate to:

- Good governance and financial sustainability
- Effective communications
- Being an employer of choice.

Specifically:

<p>4.2.2 Our membership and business enterprises generate sufficient income to meet our operational expenditure, while grant funding supports projects and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adopt a modular and sustainable business model ▶ MDA maintains submission-ready project proposals that reflect the needs of our member councils and communities ▶ Consult with our members and stakeholders to identify key community needs and project opportunities ▶ Actively seek funding for the submission-ready proposals. ▶ Prepare quality projects proposals that are well-developed and meet funding opportunities.
<p>4.2.6 Project revenues are modular and contribute to scalable projects and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Utilise our library of scalable, submission-ready projects to rapidly and effectively tap into grants programs.

I am pleased to advise that in the month of March/April, the MDA has lodged 9 grant applications across 3 programs totalling almost \$8.5m.

Funding Program	Project	Budget	Delivery Partners
Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Fund - (Round 3)	Regional Economic Diversification Program	\$4,106,646	MDA
	Basin Communities Leadership Program II	\$966,046	MDA
	Local Government Centre for Excellence	\$1,000,000	MDA CSIRO Murray River Council
	Climate Ready and Water Secure Regions	\$719,000	MDA Aither RAMJO
	Basin Communities Resilience Scorecard	\$868,760	MDA Catalyse
	Murray-Darling Basin Round-Table	\$133,000	MDA Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists
Building Better Regions Fund - Community Investments Stream - Round 5	Project planning and fundraising strategy	\$20,000	MDA It's On Purpose
	National Conference - Livestream	\$30,460	MDA
Destination NSW	National Conference Contribution	\$30,000	MDA

3.3 Membership

Following the February trip with Cr Craig Davies, the following councils have commenced paid membership with the MDA.

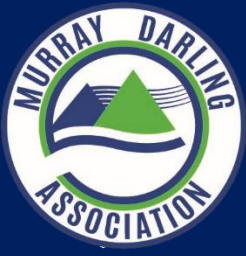
- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Coonamble Shire Council
- Mid Western Shire Council

4. Operational Update

With so much time spent out of the office in recent months, I must commend and thank the team here at the office for their dedication, commitment and exceptional teamwork.



Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer



Basin Communities Leadership Program – Stage 1 Reflections Report Murray Darling Association

Prepared by:

Emma Bradbury

Chief Executive Officer

Summary

“If there’s one thing the Murray-Darling Basin needs as much as water, its leadership.”

Cr David Thurley OAM, National President

The world is looking to the communities of the Murray Darling Basin to lead the way in water reform and management, agriculture, economic diversification and innovation. Sustainable management of the Basin relies on community leadership, policy making processes and cross-border collaboration.

The purpose of the Murray Darling Association Basin Communities Leadership Program (the program) is to identify, educate and mentor the next generation of water leaders across the Basin.

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) Basin Communities Leadership pilot program includes three main elements: online learning, face-to-face workshops, and attendance to the MDA National Conference.

Despite many challenges, including COVID restrictions, flooding and drought, the MDA has delivered **six face-to-face workshops** with the remaining workshops to be held later this year.

Workshops delivered include:

- Wakool, NSW – 10 & 11 September 2020
- Warren, NSW – 15 & 16 October 2020
- Cunnamulla, QLD – 29 & 30 March 2021
- Dirranbandi, QLD – 31 March & 1 April 2021
- St George, QLD – 6 & 7 April 2021
- Collarenebri, NSW – 8 & 9 April 2021

The MDA is excited to deliver the remaining workshops across the southern part of the Basin and has already received high levels of interest.

The commitment to leadership throughout Basin communities is truly inspiring. The MDA looks forward to the ongoing positive impact by the leadership program alumni in years to come.

Learnings

From this pilot program, the MDA has learned the following:

- The program’s focus on personal awareness, community leadership, and Murray-Darling Basin context is a powerful combination.
- While multi-modal learning is an important element of the program, the face-to-face workshops are vital and should not be replaced.
- Recruitment of participants benefits for partnering with local training facilitators.

Participant testimonials

- “Absolutely invaluable to understanding our communities styles, strength’s and weaknesses”

**Donna Haslam, Business Owner
Dirranbandi**

- “We definitely would like more of this kind of learning”

Amanda Fox
DV Support Worker – Far West Indigenous Family Violence Service Cunnamulla

- “Understanding that I don’t need large groups to get a message across, but key networks to deliver it is the most significant learning”

Anna Mariella Perez
Community Development Officer, St George

- “5 Star - educational and transformative”

Doug Hemming
Business Owner, Dirranbandi

Statements of Impact

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack commended the program and noted the importance of finding the next generation of people who are going to take the issue of water security and water management and water resources forward.

“We need those young people, and some not so young, to be able to stand up to say what they need to say and have the courage of their convictions to make sure they understand the complex and complicated water resources, to clearly articulate what they mean in the national space but for local outcomes.”

“We look forward to those young people, those young leaders of tomorrow emerging, putting their hands up and saying I want to work in this space, I want to make sure that my community gets its fair share and making sure they identify the problem, but also have solutions.”

Warren Shire Council Mayor Milton Quigley welcomed the inclusion of Warren in the Murray Darling Association’s leadership program.

“I am excited that the Murray Darling Association has chosen Warren as one of its venues for the provision of the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program. My belief is that there is considerable and demonstrable leadership ability in our community,” said Mayor Quigley.

“I encourage anyone with even a slight interest in the program to make themselves available for the Warren workshop and the associated online modules.”

Mildura Mayor Simon Clemence welcomed the inclusion of Sunraysia-based towns in the Murray Darling Association’s leadership program.

“This is a powerful opportunity for local residents to develop leadership skills while using their local knowledge and insights to protect one of our nation’s most important assets,” Cr Clemence said.

“No-one feels the impacts of changes to water management more than residents living in affected communities along the Murray-Darling, and the BCLP is a great way to ensure their voice is heard.”

Murray Darling Association Report for Delegates

April 2021



The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is Australia's peak body representing local government across the Murray-Darling Basin. The following delegate's report provides a detailed report of MDA activities and engagements for tabling at council.

1. Welcome to new members

The MDA would like to welcome the following councils who have commenced paid membership with the MDA:

- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Coonamble Shire Council
- Mid Western Shire Council

We look forward to working together to achieve a healthy, vibrant and thriving Murray-Darling Basin.

2. National Conference

Themed *Connectivity: Connecting Councils and Catchments*, the MDA's 2021 National Conference & AGM will be held on 16 - 19 May 2021 in Wentworth. This unmissable event is an opportunity to tackle the big issues of the Basin and forge a future for connected councils and catchments.

Numbers are filling up fast with this year looking to be the most well-attended conference in MDA history – don't miss the opportunity for your council to participate. Register today: www.mda.asn.au



3. Submissions

This month, the MDA provided written feedback to the Productivity Commission, including:

- a. Feedback to the Productivity Commission for the Register of Foreign-owned Water Inquiry Issues Paper. The submission is available [here](#).
- b. Feedback for the Inquiry into the effectiveness of the implementation of the Basin Plan and water resource plans. The submission is available [here](#).

In addition to the written feedback, MDA CEO and Policy Officer met with the Commissioner Jonathan Coppel and his team on Thursday 25 March 2021 to provide further feedback.

4. Grants and Opportunities

This month, the MDA lodged 9 grant applications across 3 programs totalling almost \$8.5m. Projects include:

- Regional Economic Diversification Program
- Basin Communities Leadership Program II
- Local Government Centre for Excellence
- Climate Ready and Water Secure Regions
- Basin Communities Resilience Scorecard
- Coalition of Peaks

5. Key meetings

Several key meetings and engagements were held in the past month, including:

- National President Cr Thurley and CEO Emma Bradbury attended the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's **Climate Resilience Summit** in Canberra on 12 March
- CEO Emma Bradbury met with the **MDBA for a stakeholder dinner** in Echuca on 17 March 2021
- CEO Emma Bradbury and Policy Officer James Marshal met with the **Productivity Commission** to discuss the inquiry into the Register of foreign-owned water entitlements on 25 March 2021
- CEO Emma Bradbury presented at the **Darling Downs & South West QLD Council of Mayors Meeting** in Charleville on 26 March 2020
- CEO Emma Bradbury met with **Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment Northern Tour delegates** on 31 March 2021

6. Projects – leadership program

Overcoming many obstacles including flooding and COVID-19 restrictions, the MDA recently facilitated four inspiring Basin Communities Leadership workshops in the Northern Basin, including workshops in Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, St George and Collarenebri.

Thank you to the absolutely amazing group of participants who participated and brought to the table some great program ideas that emphasise local leadership achieving national solutions.

A big thank you also to MDA members **Paroo Shire Council**, **Balonne Shire Council** and **Walgett Shire Council** for hosting the workshops in your wonderful communities.

We will shortly announce key leadership program dates for the rest of the Basin. We warmly welcome member councils to make the most of the opportunity and encourage councillors, officers and staff participate in the program, valued at \$4,800 per participant.

To find out more about the program and how your council can get involved, please call our team on (03) 5480 3805.

7. Region Meetings

Our 12 regions meet quarterly. Each meeting is a fabulous opportunity to collaborate with councils in your region and hear from fantastic guest speakers. To find out when your next region meeting is, please contact your chair or our office on (03) 5480 3805.

To find out more about what is happening in other MDA regions, please head over to www.mda.asn.au where all region meeting minutes are available.

8. Committee of Regional Chairs

The Murray Darling Association held its inaugural *Committee of Regional Chairs* meeting on Monday 15 March 2021. Following [Board Meeting 406](#), the committee will meet bi-monthly for the purpose of knowledge sharing, regional development and inter-regional collaboration.

