



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Region 6 Ordinary Meeting

Minutes

Location:	Alexandrina Council Chambers - Goolwa 11 Cadell Street, GOOLWA SA 5214
Time/date:	10am – 1.35pm; Friday 13 December 2019
Presenter:	Neville Crossman (Director, Social and Economic Integration Section, MDBA)

1. WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

Alexandrina Council and its communities acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of our Council district, and of the wider Lower Murray, Lower Lakes and Coorong region.

1.2. Housekeeping

Safety, toilets, lunch from 12-12.30pm.

2. ATTENDANCE

2.1. Present:

Voting members:

Cr Melissa Rebeck – Chair, Glenn Rappenberg, Cr Michael Scott (Alexandrina Council);

Cr Vern Leng, Cr Brenton Qualmann, Samantha Blight as proxy for Tracey Strugnell (Coorong District Council)

Mayor Brenton Lewis, Stephen Packer (Rural City of Murray Bridge)

Cr Marilyn Henderson (City of Victor Harbor)

Julie Barrie, Keith Loeser, Bruce Brooks, Frank Tuckwell (Private Members)

2.2. Guests:

Neville Crossman (MDBA, Director, Social and Economic Integration Section)

Ken Scott (MDBA)

Tony Banks for Emma Bradbury (MDA; via phone)

Colin Grundy (Mundoo Pastoral Company)

Liz Livingstone (Goolwa Slipway and Marina)

Monika Rhodes (Secretariat)

2.3 Apologies:

Jason Taylor (Southern Mallee District Council)
Cr Tracy Hill, Tracey Strugnell (Coorong District Council)
Monique White, Deana Mildren (MDBA)
Heather Barclay (Rural City of Murray Bridge)
Cr Miles Hannemann (Tatiara District Council)
Emma Bradbury (CEO MDA)
Peter Smith

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Nil.

4. MINUTES

Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting on 11 October 2019 (Taillem Bend).

Moved: Cr Qualmann

Seconded: Cr Henderson

Carried.

5. REPORTS

5.1 MDA Report – Tony Banks (via phone) : Topics highlighted / of significance to MDA Region 6

MDA Basin Community Leadership Program (BCLP):

- The MDA remains committed to the ongoing development, capacity building and support to the regional communities and local Government bodies throughout the MDB.
- The MDA has been funded by the Government to facilitate a Basin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) in 15 MDB communities which have been identified as being most impacted by the recent water policy changes.
- Region 6 has been identified as one of these main MDB regions who have been impacted; and as such, the MDA will be facilitating a BCLP workshops within Region 6 at: Lower Lakes across the 26-27 May 2020.
- Additional information packs will be sent out in the coming weeks for Regional awareness and review.
- Advertising and recruitment campaigns will commence February 2020 with a target of finalising the selection panels and identifying up to 15 aspiring community leaders at each of these locations later in March 2020.
- Any further queries can be directed towards the MDA executives pending the information packs being released in the coming weeks.

Significant media coverage and interests growing across the MDB toward the various State's responses and position on the Murray Darling Basin Plan:

- The MDA has been working hard to keep the Regional Chairs and Executives aware of the various reporting and statements being released right across the MDB for better situational awareness and informed decision making.
- The current dynamics involving the drought impacts, WESA additional recovery targets and the various State's levels of support to the plan have been very fluid.
- The MDA has released several communication reports which all highlight the ongoing need for the MDA regional forums / chairs to continue to monitor and report the growing concerns and discussions being held by MDB community members.
- Noting the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting between Federal and State leadership stakeholders, the MDA continues to reinforce the need for all policy and decision makers to

better involve the communities and local Government bodies in every step of the MDB Plan.

- The MDA; like the majority of the MDB local government bodies and communities are closely monitoring the outcomes of the MINCO meetings and any progress being made by the State's over the coming weeks.

Updates on agenda, minutes and CEO reports:

- <https://www.mda.asn.au/agendas-minutes.aspx>
- <https://www.mda.asn.au/about-us/ceo-s-reports.aspx>

5.2 Chair's Report – Cr Melissa Rebbeck

The Chair, Cr Rebbeck, informed the members that the MDA CEO is waiting on a South Australia State Government position in regards to the claims made by NSW before responding to these claims officially.

In the meantime the Chair stated the importance to get a Region 6 position, including input from relevant stakeholders (e.g. Coorong related stakeholders). Mayor Lewis suggested that a collective voice is important which would include South Australian and National MDA.

The Chair further provided an update on the MDA National Conference that was held in Toowoomba, 22-24 October 2019. Over 140 Community leaders attended the conference and the presentations were excellent. The presentations focused on the theme of "Regeneration for a Healthy Basin". Of the 21 motions only one was not carried.

Action arising:

- Interim Executive Officer: To send out a the MDA Board Report on the Conference and the notes made by the Chair, the CEO Rappensberg and Cr Scott to MDA Region 6 members.

A member of Region 6, Stephen Packer, attended the public forum for the ACCC Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry in Murray Bridge on Friday, 29 November 2019. While Region 6 did not submit an individual submission to the ACCC, our Chair provided Region 6 related comments to MDA's CEO, Emma Bradbury, for her consideration and inclusion into a MDA collated response.

The Chair stated the important work carried out and the short timeframes of responses at times. The Chair thanked the Executive Officer and Stephen Parker for sharing the work load and attending meetings where required.

Actions arising:

- Chair to provide the following Region 6 related issues to the next MDA Board meeting on Monday 16/12/19:
 - That the MDA responds to claims made by NSW that South Australia uses 97% of high security water to highlight that in return NSW has access to 96% allocation of high security water
 - Environmental water is required to fulfil Australia's international obligations under the RAMSAR agreement for international wetlands
 - To support 'myth busting' to counter claims made by NSW
 - Call for NSW to submit their Water Resource Plans.

5.3 Strategic Advisory Group Report – Mayor Lewis

Mayor Lewis encouraged all Region 6 Councils to ensure that the funding for a 0.5 FTE Executive Officer position will be made available as this is of high importance.

Mayor Lewis provided an update on the LGA meeting where the name of the LGA was discussed at length and eventually supported. He further stated that it is important to include the LGA as a strong partner as they have a direct link to state ministers. A joint deputation will be submitted next year and that Region 6 members should watch this space.

The slumping of river banks was identified as a big issue where the state government walked away and left Councils with the responsibility and associated costs (refer to item 6.2 below for further information).

5.4 Secretariat Report –Monika Rhodes

- Interim Executive Officer, Monika Rhodes, presented the draft RegiSymposium Report.

Actions arising:

- Symposium report to be finalised and distributed to all workshop participants as soon as possible ([Attachments 1a-1g](#)).
 - Time to be allocated to workshop the findings of the report and develop a revised regional strategy/action plan at the next R6 meeting to be held in February 2020.
- Interim Executive Officer Updates:
 - Secretarial support was provided in the preparation for MDA National Conference, especially in regards to Region 6 motions and response to the other motions on notice.
 - Media updates are sent out on a weekly basis (where possible) to the membership and interested groups.

5.5 Murray Darling Basin Authority Report – Neville Crossman

A presentation on the update on the Murray Darling Basin was provided by Neville Crossman (Presentation attached; [Attachment 2](#)).

5.6 Member Reports

Nil.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Update on the MDA National Conference – Chair Cr Melissa Rebbeck (Alexandrina)

The report on the MDA national conference was provided during the Chair's report (refer to 5.2).

6.2 Riverbank collapse or slumping (Rural City of Murray Bridge)

Stephen Packer updated the membership on the issues of riverbank collapsed along the Murray River:

- Approximately 160 areas of slumping are recorded along the Murray River.
- South Australia Government no longer takes responsibility and has passed this back to Councils.
- The slumping has an impact financially and socially and it is unclear if insurance will pay.
- At what stage would it become a risk to council.

Mayor Lewis responded that Region 6 should consider support through the LGA.

6.3 ACCC Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry– feedback from public forum held at Murray Bridge – Stephen Packer (Rural City of Murray Bridge)

- Stephen Packer stated that around 100 people attended the public forum, many of whom were irrigators. Concerns included:
 - investors and the ethics of the water trade
 - the MDBA is over allocated, not enough water for all demands
 - NSW and Vic have allowed permanent plantings but do not have the water to service them
 - how the water was tied to the land which became unbundled
 - difficult for farmers to understand when to buy and use the water as bigger investors have the opportunity to do the research:
 - how to understand the water and storage
 - when it flows: depending on releases, water can be traded, possibly only for a few hours which is difficult for a farmer/irrigator to take advantage of as window so small. once it flows water availability is only for a short hours when released – hard for farmers to know when This suits investors with time and capital
 - increase of price due to investments and available water
 - tweakings of the policy to create fairness also creates anomalies which are hard to follow and understand, ownership, usage, availability and the like, many different rules apply
 - most water along the river in SA and all water through the barrages is Commonwealth Environment Water Holder water and not available for anyone
 - all water coming down Murray is from Southern Basin as no water in Northern Basin.

6.4 Lower Lakes and Coorong Boating, Tourism and Environment Group – feedback from meeting held on 10 December 2019 – Stephen Packer (Rural City of Murray Bridge)

Stephen Packer provided a brief overview of the main issues identified in the meeting:

- DEW update:
 - no rainfall; no inflows
 - very low outflows
 - barrages open 4 hours a day, closely monitored
 - water is being traded out of SA
 - modelling now for 0.5AHD (currently at 0.7AHD) and 0.0AHD given no inflows.
- This will recreate slumping problems.
- NSW claim of the South Australia's 100% high secure water without mentioning that NSW itself has 96% of high secure water.
- BOM not reporting water availability in NSW accurately, stating no water available.
- Note: water reporting and myths within SA also exist, Riverland irrigators versus Lower Lakes.
- Reduction of water quality and fish kill.
- Mythbusting: How to successfully get the information out to media and wider audience. A social media page was discussed as a medium to combat misinformation and to provide accurate information instead – from the SA perspective. Reference to the MDBA fact sheets was made and how these could be included.
- MDBA: Phil Duncan appointed as Chair.
- Federal parliamentary Select committee unable to attend barrages due to Catastrophic Weather conditions on day of visit, rescheduled to March 2020.
- Mick Kealty's role being extended to entire Basin, including review and water sharing as for Northern Basin.
- Report from Kealty released on Northern Basin re water management – damning.
- Question as to who is at fault, plan or State management.
- Updated scientific report to come re Lakes and salinity.

- Lock Zero: short discussion on how the Lock Zero plans came up during the Millenium drought. May never happen due to unstable river floor.
- Length of river Art project, looking for local people to talk to.

12.00 - 12.30pm Break for Lunch

7. GUEST PRESENTER

- Neville Crossman, the Director, Social and Economic Integration Section at the MDBA, presented on the Basin Plan 2020 evaluation process (Presentation attached; [Attachment 3](#)).
- Mick Keelty AO has been appointed by the Australian Government as the [Interim Inspector-General](#) from 1 October 2019. The first year report from the Northern Basin Commissioner is available here: <https://www.igmdb.gov.au/media/5>.

8. BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 MDA-R6 Action List - Refer [Attachment 4](#)

- Induction tour of barrages - Invitation to the MDA Northern Basin to visit the barrages, ensuring that the easement owners are also invited.
 - **Moved:** Cr Henderson
 - **Seconded:** Stephen Packer
 - **Carried.**
- [ACSEES](#) – The Lower Lakes Independent Science Review:

Actions arising:

It was decided that the Chair will contact the Lead Panel Member [Dr Fancis Chiew of CSIRO](#) to provide him with appropriate contacts of key persons who understand the ecology and history of the Lower Lakes.

- **Moved:** Mayor Lewis
- **Seconded:** Cr Leng
- **Carried.**

8.2 Correspondence

- MDA Submission into the ACCC inquiry, attached to the agenda, was noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Discussion were held around Keith Loeser's question *to what extent are we beholding to a World Authority regarding food production and water use?*
- Invitation was extended to Colin Grundy and Liz Livingstone to become MDA Region 6 members.

10. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

At the Executive Region 6 meeting it was decided that the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Region 6 and the next Ordinary Meeting will be held on Friday 14 February 2020 at the Rural City of Murray Bridge:

- **Annual General Meeting: Friday 14 February 2020; 11am to 12pm**
- **Region 6 Ordinary Meeting: Friday 14 February 2020; 12.30 to 3.30pm.**

Venue: Local Government Centre, 2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge; Mobilong Suite, Murray Bridge SA 5253.

It was further decided that the Executive meeting will be held ahead of the AGM and the Ordinary Meeting on Friday 14 February 2020 at the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

11. CLOSE (1.40pm)

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

CURRENT REGION 6 MEMBERSHIP				
Position	Name	Council	Member of Executive	Voting Member
Chair	Councillor Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina		
Secretariat	Monika Rhodes	Alexandrina		
Council Representatives	Mayor Brenton Lewis	Rural City of Murray Bridge		
	Heather Barclay	Rural City of Murray Bridge		
	Stephen Packer	Rural City of Murray Bridge		
	Tracey Strugnell	Coorong District		
	Councillor Miles Hannemann	Tatiara District		
	Councillor Vern Leng	Coorong District		
	Councillor Brenton Qualmann	Coorong District		
	Councillor Tracy Hill (proxy)	Coorong District		
	Glenn Rappensberg	Alexandrina		
	Councillor Michael Scott	Alexandrina		
	Marilyn Henderson	Victor Harbor		
	Jason Taylor	Southern Mallee District		
Private Members	Keith Loeser			
	Julie Barrie			
	Frank Tuckwell			
	Bruce Brooks			