



MINUTES

**MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION (MDA) INC.
REGION 9 ORDINARY MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 10.30AM**

PRESENT

Cr Glen Andreazza (Griffith City Council via Zoom), Emma Bradbury (CEO MDA via Zoom), Shane Wilson (Narrandera Shire Council via Zoom), Jenny Clarke (Councillor Narrandera Shire Council via Zoom), Russell Campbell (Carrathool Shire Council via Zoom), Tim Philips (MDA Communications and Engagement Officer via Zoom), Mayor Greg Conkey (Wagga Wagga City Council via Zoom), Bede Spannangle (Riverina Water County Council via Zoom), Joe Burns (Private Member in-Person), Kim Burgess (Minute Secretary in-Person), Meeting Part-thereof : Mayor Paul Maytom (Leeton Shire Council via Zoom), Jackie Kruger (GM Leeton City Council via Zoom)

1 APOLOGIES

Hon Michael McCormack MP (Member for Riverina), Mayor Neville Kschenka (Narrandera Shire Council), Mayor Ruth McRae (Murrumbidgee Shire Council), Mayor John Dal Broi (Griffith City Council), Brett Stonestreet (GM Griffith City Council)

2 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

MDA Region 9 Chair, Cr Glen Andreazza welcomed members to the meeting.

Glen paid tribute to previous Chair Paul Maytom and the wonderful contribution that Paul has made to the MDA Region 9 as a long serving member and Chair.

Glen on behalf of MDA Region 9 thanked outgoing MDA CEO Emma Bradbury for her leadership and assistance to all members during her time as CEO.

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nil

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the MDA Region 9 AGM held on 26 July 2021, having previously been circulated amongst the members were confirmed. The Minutes of the previous Ordinary Meeting held the same day on 26 July 2021, having previously been circulated amongst the members were confirmed.

5 CEO'S REPORT

This is the last meeting for CEO Emma Bradbury, with new CEO Mark Lamb commencing on 1 Dec 2021. Emma reported that Mark has a depth of experience in many areas of CEO duties and is looking to supporting the MDA membership and ensure value to all through strong regional engagement. A handover to Mark to occur late November 2021. There is a proposed future relocation of the MDA Office from Echuca to Wodonga

Emma in her report added that the MDA is providing a submission to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan 2021. The essence of the submission is that there needs to be a managed and measured approach to the National Park.

Emma mentioned that there is a National Water Infrastructure Advisory Committee Meeting next week.

Emma added that the MDA is unsuccessful under the community investment package. There needs to be a call on the Federal Government for recurrent funding for growth and development.

RESOLVED on the motion of Greg Conkey and Glen Andrezza that outgoing MDA CEO Emma Bradbury, present via Zoom today, receive the gratitude and thanks by all Regions and Members of the MDA.

6 GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Final NSW Water Strategy

Noted by the group.

6.2 NSW Government Response – Water Infrastructure Inquiry

Noted by the group.

6.3 CEWO Water Delivery Update Spring 2021

Noted by the group. Webinars on this subject are being delivered by CEWO.

6.4 Lake Mejum/LakeCoolah

Noted by the group. To be an item at the next MDA Region 9 meeting.

Russell Campbell raised a question around the contribution of funds from water users in the Murrumbidgee Valley to MDA in the past.

The MDA Region 9 group thanked Russell Campbell and Greg Conkey for their involvement and contribution to the MDA Region 9 over a number of years and wished them all the very best for the future.

7 PRESENTATION

Brian Graham, Manager Water Allocations DPIE Water provided a presentation on Water Allocations and an overall summary of the Murrumbidgee Allocations Statement.

Priyantha Jayakody, Senior Hydrologist, Policy, Planning & Sciences Division, Water Group, DPIE, provided a presentation on the Application of the Water Sharing Plan: Operational Function.

Chair Glen Andrezza mentioned that the Department in years gone by, provided regular statements regarding the allocations and items around that issue. Chair requested that this request be taken on board by DPIE for possible reintroduction in the future, to assist water users and stakeholders throughout the Murray-Darling Regions.

8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held Third Thursday February or March 2022. To be confirmed to the Members of Region 9.

TITLE Lake Mejum/Lake Coolah

TRIM REF 22/26024

Chair Glen Andreazza to raise this item.

ATTACHMENTS

(a) Motion - Lake Coolah Feasibility 3

Motion 5.2 Region 9 – [Leeton Shire Council]

Motion:

That the Murray Darling Association

- a) call on the National Water Infrastructure Grid Taskforce and the NSW State Government to inquire into the merits and feasibility of the Lake Mejum / Lake Coolah project, and
 - b) commend the project to the One Basin CRC for detailed assessment of industry lead efficiencies
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Objective:

- To improve and optimize the water logistics in the Murrumbidgee Valley for both the Environmental Water Holder and Irrigators
- Beneficial improvements and outcomes will assist the Environmental water holder achieve their outcomes, through better timing and positioning of water during the winter months.
- Reduction on logistics pressure on the Murrumbidgee River when environmental flows and irrigator flows are competing for flow space.
- Assist in flood mitigation around North Wagga Wagga and between Berembed Weir and Yanco Weir
- Permit greater optimisation of the Snowy Mountain network of water storages in managing carry over inter seasonal irrigation and environmental water.
- Opportunity to allow greater confidence to communities and industries within the Murrumbidgee Valley to forward plan and establish security around their commercial ventures.

Key Arguments:

- Capable of being managed into and complementary to the NSW sustainable diversion plan.
- Murrumbidgee Valley irrigated agriculture has moved to a more permanent cropping regime requiring the management of carry over inter-seasonal water.
- The Environmental Water holder in a new user of both water storage and water logistic assets that competes irrigators and agribusiness across both assets' classes.
- Water management practices need to be developed to manage the needs of the current and future environmental and agribusiness requirements.
- Opportunity to build a large efficient winter month (April – October) operated off river storage for both the management of environmental flows and outcomes, plus service the carryover water requirements for permanent crops, allowing greater airspace in the Snowy Mountain storages to capture more of the Spring and Summer inflows
- Water storage for inflows to the Murrumbidgee Valley below the major Snowy Mountain storages
- LIDAR survey and solar pumping of water will allow better engineering using current and contemporary design of water storages at Lake Coolah and Lake Mejum than what was

previously perceived, the lakes could become a series of smaller lakes pumping from the lowest to highest to ensure surface area is limited to evaporation.

- Low cost per megalitre water storage asset that can be shared equitably amongst all stakeholders.
- Attractive development asset for private – public investment
- Sustainable future refinement and development of the Murrumbidgee Valley will stall and halt.

Summary

- Lake Coolah – Lake Mejum development opportunity must be viewed through the lenses of current and future day agribusiness and environmental requirements; much has changed over the past two decades.

New surveying technologies and available to refine the design storage concepts and solar (with battery backup) pumping large volumes of water is now a proven resource.

Environmental flows competing with summer irrigation demand will eventually kill the river system.

Lake Coolah – Lake Mejum development offers a low per megalitre cost water storage asset to sustain and potentially optimise both environmental outcomes along with community and commercial pursuits.

TITLE **Draft Murray and Murrumbidgee Regional Water Strategies**

TRIM REF **22/28549**

For the attention of the MDA Region 9 Members –

As the attachments are very large in File Size - Please refer to the link provided in the email to Members, dated 11 Mar 2022.

Also here

<https://files.griffith.nsw.gov.au/KB243235235.zip>

ATTACHMENTS

Nil