



Murray Darling Association Inc.

Ordinary Meeting of Region 6

20 August 2021

10:00 – 15:00

Coorong District Council

Council Chambers

95-101 Railway Terrace, Tailem Bend SA 5260

or

[Join meeting online](#)

Meeting ID: 857 4893 5942, Passcode: 28628;

One tap mobile +61861193900, 85748935942#, *286288#

Meeting Minutes – August 2021

1. WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

On behalf of host Coorong District Council, Cr Qualmann kindly provided welcome and acknowledgement of country as well as a house keeping

2. ATTENDANCE

2.1. PRESENT

Mayor Brenton Lewis (Acting Chair)	Rural City of Murray Bridge
GM Heather Barclay	Rural City of Murray Bridge
Stephen Packer	Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB)
Cr. Qualmann	Coorong District Council
Cr. Vern Leng	Coorong District Council
CEO Bridget Mather	Coorong District Council (CDC)
Cr Marilyn Henderson	City of Victor Harbor (CVH) - virtual
Cr. Michael Scott ASM OAM	Alexandrina Council - virtual
Warren Jacobs	Independent - virtual

2.2. GUESTS

CEO Emma Bradbury	MDA Inc. - virtual
EO Nathan Bicknell	EO MDA Region 6
Deana Mildren	Murray Darling Basin Authority
Ken Scott	Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
Michelle Campbell	Commonwealth Environment Water Office (CEWO)

2.3. APOLOGIES

Cr. Melissa Rebbeck (Chair)	Alexandrina
Glenn Rappensberg	Alexandrina (Alx.)
Colin Grundy	Independent (Ind.)

2.4. DECLARATIONS

Nil

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion: that the minutes of the Murray Darling Association (MDA) Region 6 - Ordinary Meeting held 11 June 2021 be approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

Stephen Packer / Cr. Marilyn Henderson / Carried

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chair

The Chair's report as tabled was taken as read ([attachment 1](#)).

4.2 MDA CEO

Emma spoke to the June August MDA CEO report as tabled ([attachment 2](#)).

Discussion: Focused upon the following topics

- The ongoing work of the MDA Board in lobbying the Government for inclusion in their decision-making structures and provide base level of funding to do so;
- With the support of NSW Department, the MDA to present to MDBA's Basin Officials Committee (BOC) in September;
- Strengthening relationships with local government associations at the State and national level, about working stronger together;
- MDA Leadership Program in SA, Lower Lakes - 24 and 25 October 2021 at Alexandrina Council;
- MDA Regional Boundaries Discussion Paper;
- MDA Board to support establishment of a First Nation's Advisory Committee;
- NSW Select Committee – Flood Plain Harvesting - submission
- Notice of Emma's' resignation in November pending the appointment of as successor;
- Emma thanked Region 6 and members for their contribution and engagement in the MDA, and
- Looked forward to seeing people firsthand in October.

Discussion:

- Mayor Lewis, took the opportunity to congratulate and thank Emma Bradbury for her positive contribution to the MDA and the Basin in her time as CEO; n particular
 - Improving the reputation and representation of the MDA in the national decision making framework; and the success and value of the MDA's National Conference in bringing people together.
 - Cr Qualmann, endorsed this sentiment and thanked Emma for her service to the organization
 - Cr Scott, also endorsed this view but went on to express his disappointment with the way in which the name change consultation played out in South Australia;
 - Emma suggesting this issues is reflective of the inherent challenge of a diverse constituency, but is heartened by positive conversation with the SA LGA recently;
 - Heather Barclay, also took the opportunity to thank Emma and acknowledge the value of the National Conferences. Also endorsing the social economics report by Deputy Mayor Cr. Ella Winnall of Berri Barmera Council- Region 5 scholarship, for the conference at Albury City Council (2022); and
 - Michelle Campbell (CEWO), took the opportunity to congratulate and thank Emma. Highlighting the potential of upskilling Local Government "tourism information Centre volunteers" to promote water literacy and support local tourism spend.
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10:41 Emma Bradbury departed the meeting.

4.3 Member's Updates (written and verbal)

The Chair reminded members of the update template as circulated and invited members to provide a brief verbal update.

4.3.1. Mayor Lewis (RCMB):

- No recent meeting of the MDA's Strategic Reference Committee;
- Acknowledgement of the excellent MDA National Conference in Wentworth; and
- A Coalition of Council's are pursuing the vexed issue of Riverbank Slumping and responsibility for remediation.

4.3.2 GM Heather Barclay (RCMB):

- Executive has been focusing on the Symposium and associated Networking Dinner and Field trip

4.3.2 Stephen Packer (RCMB):

- Attended new Community Science Forum (MDBA);
- Attended Northern Basin and FPH the Webinar (MDBA); and
- Contributing to the Region 6 symposium project team.

4.3.3 CEO Bridget Mather (CDC):

- Involved in the review of the Coorong National Park Visitor Plan consultation with the Department of Environment and Water (DEW).

4.3.4 Cr. Vern Leng (CDC):

- Attended Coorong Improvement Investigation Projects (DEW);
- The Northern Basin Webinar (MDBA) also;
- Coorong Environmental Trust meetings, with Faith Colman and Rivers Lakes Coorong Action Group; and
- Lakes and Coorong's' Fisheries Management Advisory Committee meetings with Primary Industries and regions SA (PIRSA).

4.3.5 Warren Jacobs (Ind.)

Provided a brief introduction to the members he is yet to meet, regarding his background in dairy farming and interest in water management and involvement in the national Farmers Federation (NFF)- water committee.

4.4 MURRAY DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY – Update -Deana Mildren (Deferred to General Business)

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 CORRESPONDENCE OUT

Nil

5.2 CORRESPONDENCE IN

Discussion: Members noted the correspondence from Mr Tuckwell, regarding his resignation. Cr Scott took the opportunity to acknowledge Franks' long and distinguished service to Local Government, the MDA and the River and would recommend he be nominated for life membership.

Motion: that the Region 6 Committee write formally to Mr Tuckwell acknowledging his service and recommend the Executive nominate him to the MDA Board for life membership.

Cr Michael Scott / CrVern Leng / Carried

Action: that the EO prepare a draft latter of acknowledgement for the consideration of the Chair.

6. BUSINESS ARISING

Members reviewed actions arising and actions as recorded in MDA-R6 matters in progress from the previous Ordinary meetings.

Discussion: Focussed upon;

- [6.1] The evolution of NAC as the key local representative group;
 - [4.3] That Emma had touched upon but not gone into detail about the Boundary Realignment, more details can be found in the latest draft board meeting minutes. Cr Rebbeck is conscience of the sensitivity of the issue in relation to Region 6;
 - [4.3] To support and encourage colleagues from Region 8 to renew their MDA; and
 - [8] That council coms are co-ordinating with MDA to promote the BCLP program.
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7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 MURRAY DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY – UPDATE

Deana Mildren presented an update of the Authority's activities ([attachment 3](#)) including:

- Current Storages across the Basin;
 - (70+ percent);
 - Water released from Hume Dam;
 - Flow to SA at 15/20 ML/day (4 being monthly entitlement) the rest unregulated flow;
 - MDBA's first annual compliance report described;
 - 106 of 109 units were compliant (+-20%);
 - The Barwon/Darling unit did not comply with their draft WMP (old models and meters);
 - Legislation passed to enact the Office of the Inspector General (Compliance); and
 - Community Science Forums and Webinars.
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7.2 GUEST SPEAKER –

Ken Scott - Assistant Director, Groundwater Management, and SDL Accounting Program (MDBA) provided an overview of Groundwater Management across the basin ([attachment 4](#)). Including, the following:

- Importance of groundwater in the Basin
- How groundwater is managed under the Basin Plan;
- Groundwater take limits (SDLs);
- Water resource planning; and
- SDL reporting and compliance

Discussion: Ken was also took questions from the members:

Q: Are these Ground Water units (of management) related to the "Great Artisian Basin"?

A: Unlike surface units (catchment scales) ground water units can overlay each other by enahbbiting different depths, some are connected and others are seprate. Those under the Basin Plan are not connected to the Great Artisian Basin.

Q: Who manages Groundwater Complinance? – Stephen Packer

A: While SDLs from part og the Basin Plan and cap on diversions. Complinance (licnecing and metering) is largely state based perogative (like surface water).

Q: How are differnces in mgeo morphology accouted for (i.e Recharge rates etc)? - Cr Marilyn Henderson.

A: While there is always more to understand, management units are largely a grouping like geomorphology and specific mangment plans to best suit those general characteristics.

Q: Rainfall is used as a proxy for recharge? – Warren Jacobs

A: Yes some NSW ground water units use a simple ledger to mange sustainble extraction (credit Rainfall vs Debit Extraction), it has its advantages and inherent limitations.

Q: How is salinity managed for (i.e. upper limites etc?) - Stephen Packer

A: Each mangment unit may have different base levels of salinity. It is managed and monitored but is largely self-regulated (too salty, no uses, no pump). The main concern it that excessive localised pumping (hot spots) can also impact salinity of surrounding areas (cone depression) even change the flow direction (pressure gradient).

Noon: Lunch

Members; Heather Barclay and Cr. Marilyn Henderson as well as guests Deana Mildren and Ken Scott departed the meeting.

7.3 COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL WATER OFFICE

Michelle Campbell, Local Engagement Officer (LEO) Berri, provided a presentation of CEWO activities/priorities including ([attachment 5](#)):

- Overview of the 2020/21 environmental water (e-water) year (low flow condtions);
- Objectives of ‘longitudinal connection’ (reaches) was good and fish responded inkind;
- With a full complement of entitelments it did not meet the 18-20ML/day flow required to support lotic fish breeding in channel; and
- A significant way off, “bank-full” scanarios.

- Priorities for 2021/22 e-water year (higher flow conditions) – “latitudinal connection” (floodplains and wetlands);
- “Flow the Ibis” initiative to showcase the multiple uses of e- water down the system (not just the end);
- The filling of Minindi Lakes (first time since 2016) will allow e-water to support releases down the Great Darling (Baaka) Anabranh (first time in 10+years); and
- Support the “Golden Highway” for Golden Perch distrobution from Meninid Lakes (most significant nursuary) throughout the Darling (Baaka) and Southern Connected Basin.

Discussion: Focused upon;

- The clear distinctions between environmental and cultural-water management and water ownership;
 - Cr. Scott noted that, “the progrssive and positve work if the CEWO with the limiteds water available is the success story of the Basin Plan”; and
 - Despite these suceses, support for the Basin Plan is at all time low (18 per cent) and CEWO is the convenient whipping boy for the ills of stakeholders (arispace, erroson, allocations, social problems productivity loss).
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8. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & WORK PLAN

In November 2020, the Executive recommended carrying over the Strategic Directions and Work Plan (2020) into 2021, to be updated on an as needs basis and reviewed following the outcomes of the Annual Stakeholder Symposium.

8.1 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- At the last meeting of the Executive it was proposed to move the “Interregional Meeting” to prior to the next Ordinary Meting - 12 November 2021; and
- The MDA’s Leadership Program, Lower lakes rescheduled to - 24 and 25 October 2021 as previously discussed.

Discussion: Members noted the update and will provide feedback/suggestions for the agenda to the Executive as required.

8.2 SYMPOSIUM WORKING GROUP UPDATE

To support delivery of the Symposium a Working Group meets monthly via WebEx, and when applicable, it is combined with a meeting of the Executive. The EO Nathan Bicknell spoke to the, Symposium Working Group Update – August (2021) as tabled ([attachment 6](#)).

Discussion: The members noted the updates and commended the actions taken to date.

9. NEXT MEETING

Ordinary/Inter-regional meeting - 12 November 2021 – Rural City of Murray Bridge

9.1 Guest Speakers

Suggestion to be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

10. CLOSE – 14:30

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks the Coorong District Council for its support in hosting this Ordinary meeting and video conference of Region 6.
