



Region 4 Ordinary Meeting

AGENDA

Location:	Midway Centre 6 Midway Drive, Buronga, NSW
Time/date:	Thursday 27 August 2018 – 1:30pm EST
Presenters:	Nil

1. ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 Present:
- 1.2 Apologies:

2. WELCOME

- 2.1 Chair

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4. MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting on 20 July 2018 in Wentworth (*attached*).

5. BUSINESS ARISING

- 5.1 Proper, effective consultation strategy with NSW Department DOI would be suggested
- 5.2 Update regarding Balranald joining Region 4

6. REPORTS

- 6.1 Chairman's Report – Mayor Hederics (verbal)

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

- 7.1 MDA 2017 - 2018 Annual Report (*attached*)
- 7.2 2017 AGM Motion response (*attached*)
- 7.3 2018 AGM motions result and report (*attached*)
- 7.4 Submissions:
 - 7.4.1 Productivity Commission draft submission previously circulated. Hearing will be held in Mildura.
 - 7.4.2 Royal Commission submissions and feedback
 - 7.4.3 Wentworth Shire Council Lower Darling Options Submission (*attached*)
- 7.5 Water Reform Action Plan – NSW Water Metering Framework Policy and Regulation Submissions due 30 September (*Industry Technical Forum Water Metering Summary attached*)
- 7.6 MDA Board have instituted a strategic advisory committee to look at Region boundaries - input

from regions has been requested.

7.7 The NSW Government is currently implementing the NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy (the Policy) in the Northern Basin. A series of workshops will be held in October 2018 to:

- Improve understanding of modelling methodology and approach.
- Seek feedback on key modelling assumptions and key monitoring and auditing requirements.

Attendance at the workshops is by invitation only, subject to registration by 21 September. Email previously sent to members advising of this. Workshop dates and locations as follows:

Location	Date	Time
Dubbo	Monday 8 October	10:00 – 14:00
Sydney	Wednesday 10 October	10:00 – 14:00
Tamworth	Friday 12 October	10:00 – 14:00

8. PRESENTATION

8.1 Nil

9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

10. CLOSE

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks Wentworth Shire Council for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 4.



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**Region 4 Meeting
4:00pm Friday, July 20, 2018
Midway Centre, Buronga**

MINUTES

Pre Meeting Briefing - Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project

Briefing from representatives of NSW Government departments to be attended prior to meeting proper, including (by telephone): Tegan Livingstone, Project Management Menindee Lakes SDL Project; Darren Blacker, DPI Water; Mitchell Isaacs, Intergovt; Rachell Connell, Executive Director Dept Primary Industries.

Rachel Connell addressed the meeting, thanking all for the opportunity to provide a presentation in relation to the Menindee Lakes Project. She said they had come from face to face meetings with the Lower Darling Horticulturalists' Group and the Menindee Community, as well as Barkandji Native Title elders.

She referred to the documents we had been provided and said that they would be meeting with Local Government, community groups and stakeholders in the next couple of months in relation to the 22 measures of the project, concept plan and the way forward and seek feedback.

In relation to all Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects – the states are putting funding to the Commonwealth to progress stakeholder consultation, prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and business case up to October, when there will be detailed time on the ground.

She introduced Daniel Blacker to go through the five step approval process.

Chair, Mayor Hederics expressed disappointment at the lack of consultation and input provided to WSC thus far.

Rachel Connell asked how should we engage? Suggesting perhaps the Joint Organisations.

Mayor Eckel asked for verification that the Menindee Lakes Project has been approved already.

Rachel Connell suggested stepping through the process.

The question was repeated: What has been approved already?

Cr Modica asked Can our people derail this project and therefore alter the processes?

Rachel Connell wanted to step through the process.

The question was repeated: Can we cease this project from happening?

Daniel Blacker said he would try to keep it truncated, where we're at in our process and then can take questions. He spoke through the five steps.

Draft business case can start talking about funding proposal. Implementation to consultation in a more

rigorous way. NSW advice from IIAF re process. (Refer handouts). He said this was the first opportunity to sit down and have discussions. They would be coming back in a couple of months.

GM WSC asked You are working to a strategy, are you not?

Rachel Connell responded that it was not set in concrete.

GM WSC asked if the pipeline was part of the strategy.

Rachel Connell said the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline is going ahead and this project would not be possible without that.

GM WSC said you are working to a strategy – for example, the NSW government has spent \$500m on a pipeline and things like Native title are side issues.

Rachel Connell said there is a strategy, yes, that critical points (like a comprehensive EIS) would need to be done.

GM WSC asked: If there is concern about the strategy and its impacts and the case was put forward, would it make a difference?

Rachel Connell said Yes, if public submissions show there is a major rift and can't be mitigation under the provisions of the EP&A Act, community views of a range of measures and positive or negative perceptions.

GM WSC asked: If that is the case, would the sacrificial lamb then be passed on to someone else?

Rachel Connell said if there were key issues, then Infrastructure NSW would look at the feasibility of options.

Mitchell Isaacs said they are not yet at the yes/no point, that there would have to be significant improvement and benefits, if this project doesn't deliver what it's modelled to deliver.

Cr Modica made the point that this project and the way it is being done is "just wrong".

Emma Bradbury suggested that the frustration with the process is replicated across the system, especially in relation to the process uncertainty, suggested greater use of the MDA in advocacy and asked how do we relook at the process on form or work together as partners?

Rachel Connell said there are documented statutory processes and obligations and they want to start to build an engagement framework. In the next two to three months they would discuss the feasibility of the project.

Cr Modica suggested that we will give them processes about how we would like to engage.

Rachel Connell said they would be visiting Council by Council.

Cr MacAllister asked for a business case to be provided for our consideration, as well as the modelling used in the business case.

Rachel Connell said the business case is on the website.

Mitchell Isaacs said the modelling, as I understand, is done by the MDBA – we can get the links to you.

Darriea and Marion said that Rachel, Simon and others were due to address BHCC next week.

Mayor Hederics expressed concern that the consultation group may be attempting to divide Councils who were united in their dissatisfaction with the project and processes to date.

Emma Bradbury suggested work could be done within the MDA to turn consultation into collaboration.

Mayor Hederics reiterated that Region 4 wants to be involved, part of the decision making and feedback

processes.

It was agreed that on receipt of business case and modelling, Region 4 would advise the next step of the process of engagement

Rachel Connell, Mitchell Isaacs, Daniel Blacker, Teagan Livingstone and Emma Bradbury left the teleconference.

MDA Region 4 meeting opened at 5pm

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

In Attendance:

Mayor Melisa Hederics - Chair	Wentworth Shire Council
Mayor Mark Eckel	Mildura Rural City Council
Cr Jason Modica	Mildura Rural City Council
Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council
Mr Peter Kozlowski	Wentworth Shire Council
Mr Gerard Jose	Mildura Rural City Council
By Telephone:	
Mayor Darriea Turley	Broken Hill City Council
Cr Marion Browne	Broken Hill City Council
Mr James Roncon	Broken Hill City Council
Ms Emma Bradbury	Murray Darling Association

1.2 Apologies

Cr Anthony Cirillo	Mildura Rural City Council
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Motion: That the apologies be accepted as a true and correct record.

J MacAllister/J Modica CARRIED

2. DECLARATIONS

Nil

3. REPORTS

Reports were given verbally and quickly, noting the amount of time taken up by presentation.

Motion: That Region 4 seek Balranald input regarding inclusion into Region 4 (from Region 3), and that if agreed, send a request to Balranald Shire Council and the MDA Board, seeking to formalize the inclusion.

J Modica/M Hederics CARRIED

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A request was made to ensure Cr Marion Browne email be included in correspondence, as BHCC delegate.

5. NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed

6. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5:05pm

The Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project presents an opportunity to save a substantial amount of water otherwise lost to evaporation while contributing to improvements in river operations and the environment. Expected benefits from the Project include: water savings, environmental benefits, flood protection, employment opportunities, and an alternate, secure water supply for Broken Hill.

The overall objectives, timeframes and cost constraints for the project are set out here:

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/165130/Menindee-Lakes-Water-Savings-Project-business-case.pdf

Under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism, the project is required to be delivered by 2024.

Close consultation with the community will be required to design the project in a way which will maximize its benefits, and minimise its negative impacts.

The purpose of this document

This document outlines the five key approval processes which must be completed before the project can proceed. The steps and consultation requirements outlined represent the minimum statutory requirements. It is anticipated that some consultation periods will be longer to ensure consultation is effective.

Five separate assessment and approval processes

1. MDBA / Basin state assessment

- Determine if the project can be included in the SDL adjustment mechanism, and eligibility for Commonwealth funding

2. Infrastructure NSW 'Gateway' process

- identification of risks associated with investing in major programs and projects

3. NSW planning approval as State Significant Infrastructure under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

- Ensure assessment, management and regulation of social, economic and environmental impacts and benefits, in a public and transparent way

4. Commonwealth Government approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Cth)*

- Protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places

5. *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* requirements

- Ensure the project is carried out in way which does not invalidly affect native title rights and interest - under the Future act processes in the Act – recognising the Barkandji Traditional Owners' determined Native Title claim which covers a significant part of the project.

The MDBA / Basin state assessment process

Status: nearly complete

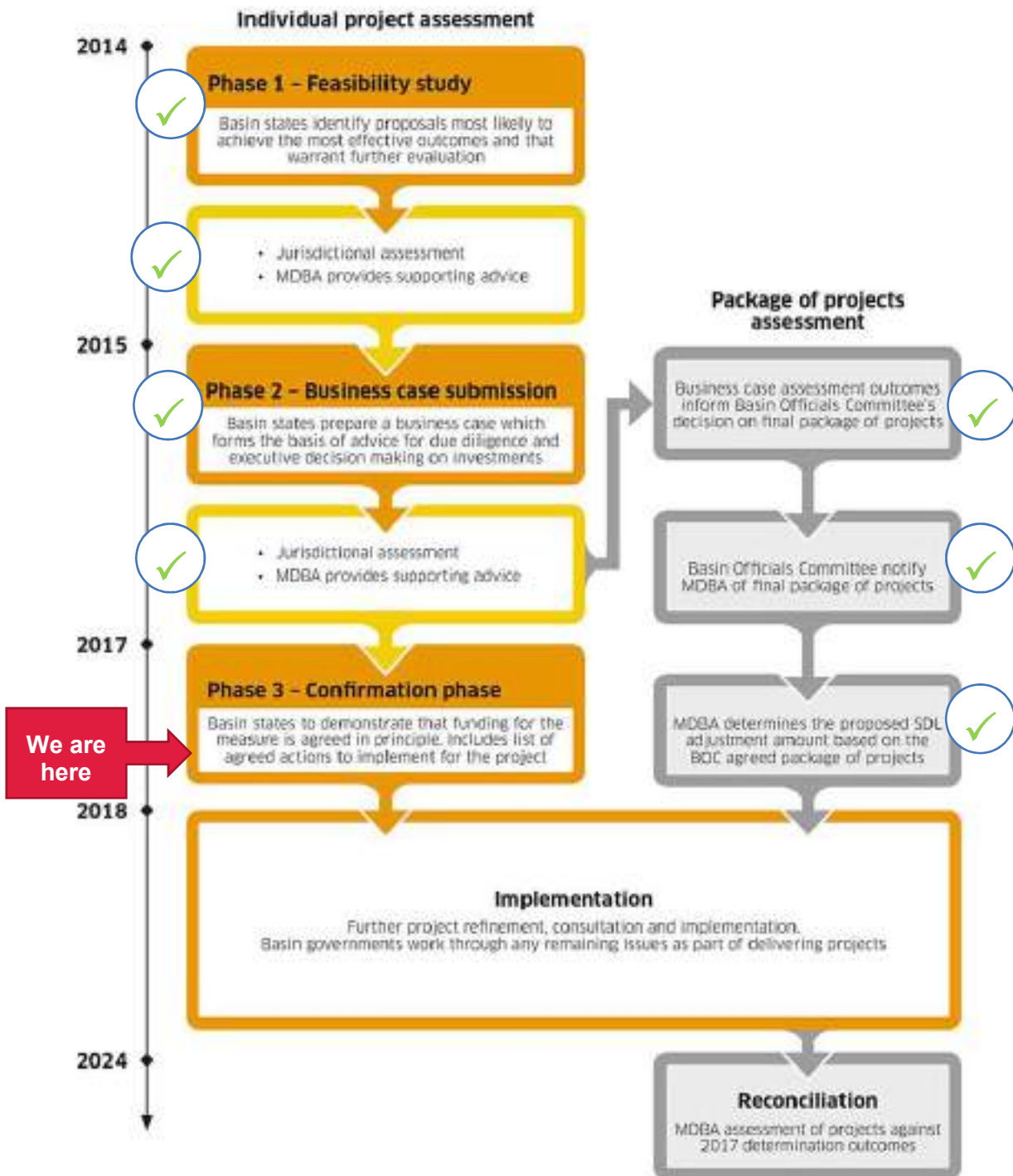


Figure 1: Assessment of SDL adjustment mechanism projects by the MDBA and basin states

See further:

MDBA - www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/sustainable-diversion-limits/sdlam

NSW Infrastructure Investor Assurance – the Gateway

Status: at initiation

To ensure better oversight of the state's infrastructure program, the NSW government implemented the Infrastructure Investor Assurance Framework (IIAF). IIAF applies to capital projects with a value of \$10 million and above, being developed or delivered by General Government agencies and Government Businesses.

The Framework consists of three pillars to check that projects are on track. These include:

- Project monitoring
- Regular project reporting
- Expert and independent Gateway Reviews and Health Checks

IIAF is a tiered, risk-based approach to evaluating the project. The process is confidential to each project, and advice is given to the NSW Government, as the investor, through regular reporting. The approach allows for "red flags" to be raised and interventions ordered in time to ensure projects are delivered on-time, on-budget, and in accordance with NSW Government's objectives.

The IIAF is the applicable Gateway Coordination Framework under NSW Gateway Policy, administered by NSW Treasury.

Gateway Reviews and Health Checks

Infrastructure NSW is the Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA) for the government's capital infrastructure projects and programs.

IIAF Gateway Review process provides for a series of short, focused, independent, expert reviews, held at key decision points in a project's lifecycle. Gateway reviews are appraisals of infrastructure projects, which highlight risks and issues, which if not addressed may threaten successful delivery. The reviews are supported by health checks, which assist in identifying issues which may emerge between decision points.

Gateway Review requirements for projects are proportionate to their Tier level:

- Tier 1 High Profile/ High Risk projects must pass through all Gates
- Tier 2 projects must pass through Gate 0 (Go/ No Go), Gate 1 (Strategic Options), and Gate 2 (Business Case) - a detailed business case with alternative options analysis needs to be prepared and submitted for Infrastructure NSW assessment
- Tier 3 projects must pass through Gate 0 (Go/ No Go)
- Tier 4 projects are lowest risk and do not require Gateway Reviews

DoI Water's initial estimate is that Menindee lakes SDL Project is likely to be a Tier 2 project; however Infrastructure NSW will review the Project when it is formally registered and allocate a Tier level.

More detail about Gates 0 – 2 is set out on the following page.

Gate 0

Service need – determine if the project aligns with Government & Agency priorities and whether the service need identified has merit and warrants further consideration. Are there sufficient governance processes and are resources available to support development of a preliminary business case?

INITIATION/JUSTIFICATION REVIEW: An Initiation/Justification Review occurs after a service need has been identified and at the earliest point in the development of the proposed service or service change and when appropriate analysis has been undertaken to allow the review to occur.

The Review should take place at the concept or project stage before any significant funds are expended and prior to developing a preliminary business case.

Gate 1

Business strategy – determine the need to be met and whether the procurement provides the optimal solution. Establish the key business objectives and outcomes. If a business need is identified – develop a program or project brief.

STRATEGIC REVIEW: The Strategic Review assesses whether the proposal is aligned with Government and the agency's strategic plans. It demonstrates the best value means of servicing community needs. The Strategic Review occurs after a service need has been identified (but prior to developing a detailed project definition in a business case) and preliminary justification for procurement has been developed.

Gate 2

*Develop options – determine the scope of the required project. **Identify and appraise the options.** Identify if affordability and value for money has been established.*

BUSINESS CASE REVIEW: The **Business Case Review assesses whether project options have been fully explored and assessed.** Before proceeding, it helps ensure that the recommended option provides the best value. The Business Case Review is undertaken after a project has been defined and its benefits and costs quantified. The Review will not be conducted unless accompanied by a financial/economic appraisal.

The review occurs before the Business Case for a project is submitted to the relevant funding authority to allow the project team to incorporate any recommendations from a review into the submission.

See further:

Infrastructure NSW - www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/project-assurance

NSW Treasury - www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/gateway-review-system-overview

Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project: The process

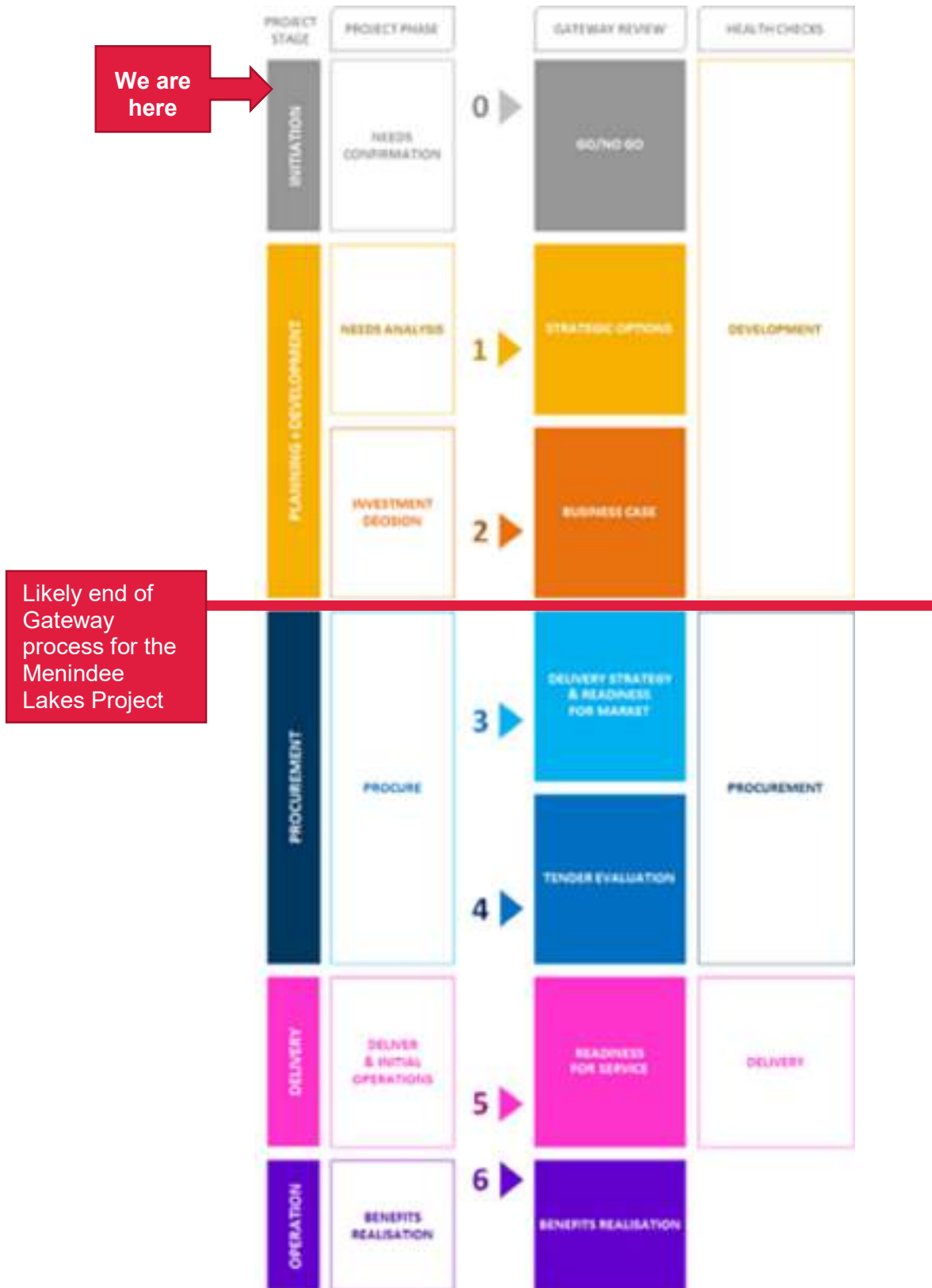


Figure 2: Gateway Review Process Gates

NSW Planning approval: State Significant Infrastructure


Status: at initiation

The Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project will likely be categorized as a State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) project under NSW planning approvals due to its size, economic value or potential impacts, and as it will have a wider significance and impact than on just the local area.

State Significant Infrastructure (SSI)

The Department of Planning and Environment is responsible for assessing SSI projects, and the Minister for Planning (or in some circumstances, his delegate) is required to approve the project.

SSI planning process are administered in the following stages:



Project Stage	Time	Responsibility
Prepare and lodge SSI application		Applicant (likely WaterNSW)
Issue Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs)	within 28 days of receiving SSI application	Department of Planning and Environment
Prepare Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	Unknown (likely up to 12 months)	Applicant (likely WaterNSW)
Exhibit EIS	28 days minimum	Department of Planning and Environment
Request response to submissions	within 10 days of end of exhibition	Department of Planning and Environment
Prepare and submit response submissions, or a preferred infrastructure report if the proposal changes		Applicant (likely WaterNSW)
Prepare assessment of application for approving authority	75 days	Department of Planning and Environment
Final determination	10 days	Minister for Planning (or Department of Planning and Environment delegate)

Note: all days are calendar days (not business days)

Major Infrastructure projects which have multiple stages or components can be considered and assessed in a number of different ways in the planning system:

- 1. Single SSI application covering all stages** (requiring sufficient details of all stages as part of the single application)

2. Staged SSI application and subsequent detailed SSI applications

A staged SSI application which:

- a. Sets out a concept proposal for the overall proposed infrastructure
- b. Seeks approval for a detailed proposal for the first stage of infrastructure e.g. construction and/or operation (optional)
- c. Specifies which detailed proposals for separate parts of the infrastructure will follow in subsequent SSI applications

3. Separate SSI applications for each stage

4. Split of SSI application/s and Part 5 self-assessments (being where a stage does not meet the State Significant triggers)


The most suitable approach will vary depending on the nature of the project. For Menindee Lakes SDL project, the most suitable approach will be determined during the project initiation phase that is planned from July 2018 to early 2019.

Commonwealth approval: EPBC Act

Status: at initiation

NSW Department of Planning and Environment assesses impacts on matters of national environmental significance on behalf of the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth retains responsibility for determining whether a project can proceed to impact on those matters.

The Environment Assessment Process can run concurrently with the SSI application to the Department of Planning and Environment, defined below:

Project Stage	Time	Responsibility	Commonwealth requirements
 Prepare and lodge SSI application		Applicant (likely WaterNSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is referred to the commonwealth, requesting determination on whether a project is a 'controlled impact' under the EPBC Act on the basis that it may be likely to have significant impact on one or more matter/s of national environmental significance.
Issue Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs)	within 28 days of receiving SSI application	Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth publishes referral documents, and seeks comments from the public, and Department of Planning and Environment. Commonwealth determines if the project may impact on matter/s of national environmental significance, and if it requires further assessment (within 20 business days of receiving referral). Commonwealth advises if assessment is required. Department of Planning and Environment includes Commonwealth matters in environmental assessment requirements if the Commonwealth decision is made before they are issued
Prepare Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)		Applicant (likely WaterNSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Planning and Environment revises environmental assessment requirements to include Commonwealth matters if the Commonwealth decision is made after they are issued
Exhibit EIS	28 days minimum	Department of Planning and Environment	
Request response to submissions	within 10 days of end of exhibition	Department of Planning and Environment	
Prepare and submit response submissions,		Applicant (likely WaterNSW)	

Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project: The process

Project Stage	Time	Responsibility	Commonwealth requirements
or a preferred infrastructure report if the proposal changes			
Prepare assessment of application for approving authority	75 days	Department of Planning and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Planning and Environment considers impacts on matter/s of national environmental significance in their assessment.
Final determination	10 days	Minister for Planning (or Department of Planning and Environment delegate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Planning and Environment formally notifies Commonwealth of determination.
Post determination		Commonwealth Minister for the Environment (or their delegate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth Minister for the Environment (or their delegate) makes a final determination on the project (within 30 business days of receiving notification of State determination).

Commonwealth Native Title Act (1993) requirements

The Native Title Act 1993 sets up processes to determine where native title exists, how future activity impacting upon native title may be undertaken, and to provide compensation where native title is impaired or extinguished. The Act gives Indigenous Australians who hold native title rights and interests or who have made a native title claim, the right to be consulted and, in some cases, to participate in decisions about activities proposed to be undertaken on the land.

Aboriginal people have occupied the Menindee region for at least 47,000 years (Balme and Hope, 1990); and in 2015, native title of the Barkandji people was recognised over lands and waters extending from Wilcannia to Wentworth. The Lakes and the Lower Darling and Darling Anabranch continue to be important to the wider Aboriginal community as resources and places of significance.

A significant part of the project area is subject to a determined Native Title claim which recognises the Barkandji Traditional Owners as the traditional owners of land.

Through the detailed design of the project, locations where the project may impact on native title rights and interests will be mapped out, and the specific process that may be required by law will be determined in consultation with the Barkandji Traditional Owners.

Regardless of whether or not native title rights apply to various parts of the project, the NSW Government recognises the significance of the land and water of the region to Aboriginal people and are committed to ensuring the Aboriginal community is consulted and included in the design and assessment of the project.

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2017-18
ANNUAL REPORT



74th annual report of the Murray Darling Association Inc: 2017-18

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Local Land Services
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CANBERRA





VALUING EVERY LAST DROP!

More than ever, this year saw the MDA working to a very high level of achievement, within a very tight budget.

As a clear demonstration of our performance, more councils and agencies are currently paying to actively access our services and utilise our networks. Fewer of our potential targets now risk missing out, with many more pleased with their investment.

This is happening because we prioritise integrity: what we say we'll do, is exactly what we do!

Our commitment to undertake a review of regional boundaries recognises this need for change. In preparing for the future, the MDA is investing in performance, people and systems.

Rest assured, we're delivering maximum value for every one of your council and community investment dollars!



“HISTORY
IS MADE BY
THOSE WHO
SHOW UP”

Benjamin Disraeli (British PM 1868 - 1880)



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INTO LESS TROUBLED WATERS

This year has seen signs of optimism following 12 months of turbulence for both the Murray-Darling Basin community and the local government sectors.

Partisan tension, revelations of water theft and the questioning of environmental recovery efforts threatened the future of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Council amalgamations in NSW challenged the finite resources of local government in that state.

And the ever-increasing expectation that we all deliver more for less is a constant pressure.

Issues relating to regulatory compliance were robustly discussed at the Murray Darling Association's 73rd National Conference, held at Renmark.

In the months that followed, Basin governments have recognised that a lack of rigor in compliance and enforcement was undermining confidence in the Basin Plan.

Numerous measures have been developed to address compliance issues, to which the Murray Darling Association is pleased to have contributed.

The recent Murray-Darling Basin Authority Compliance Compact, approved by Ministerial Council, is also a welcome statement of the commitment to see all parties act fairly.

As the development of the 36 Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects evolve, local government must have an authorised role.

Advocacy continues to be one of the MDA's strengths, with active participation on many Basin committees and advisory groups.

Our involvement with the National Carp Control Plan on the Communications Working Group continues to connect local government.

This representation requires the active support of our members, who are the

backbone of the organisation, giving voice to local issues and priorities.

However, membership growth and financial support are also essential.

This year's financial reports show an operating loss of \$20,000 for the year.

While this is the result of a clear decision by the board to invest in systems, equipment and staff to make the running of the organisation more effective and efficient, it is a clear indication that the MDA must continue to actively recruit new members to ensure a sustainable future.

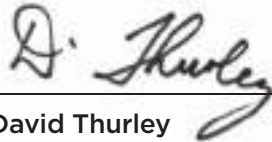
This year, the MDA commenced preparations for a Basin scale review of our regional boundaries to provide greater efficiencies for us and value to stakeholders.

For all the challenges before us, we cannot overlook the exceptional range and scale of achievements by the association in what has been an outstanding year.

I would like to acknowledge the unwavering energy and dedication of Emma Bradbury. I thank her and all our staff for their consistent commitment to always deliver more for less.

I would also like to thank all the Board members who have contributed so much during the past year. It makes the job of National President a pleasure and a privilege, leading such a dedicated team focused on achieving the best for our communities.




David Thurley
National President

HIGH PERFORMANCE, HIGH VALUE YEAR!

A high performance, high value year of outstanding achievements and activities.

During a year of immense change and challenges across the Basin, the MDA has continued to grow, delivering value to our members, and preparing for another dynamic and exciting year ahead.

The past 12 months has seen the Murray Darling Association's relevance as a national peak body increase.

Through our role with numerous statutory bodies, the Murray Darling Association is delivering strongly on its remit to ensure the interests of local government are heard and recognised.

During 2017-18, local government's interests represented by the MDA on the National Carp Control Plan working group, the Productivity Commission's Murray-Darling Basin Plan Five-Year assessment, with presentations to Basin Officials Committee, Royal Commission and more.

Discussions with more than 40 political representatives and regional organisations, as well as attendance at national conferences ensure our members of parliament and regional agencies are well-briefed and have direct access to timely and accurate information on local government perspectives and priorities.

The Murray Darling Association's 12 regions have worked collaboratively on matters that impact communities throughout the Murray-Darling Basin.

The MDA remains committed in the knowledge that so much more needs to be done.

The role of local government in informing and influencing decisions at a State and Federal level in relation to natural resource management and planning, education, economic development, renewable energies, and social health and wellbeing across the Basin require us to continue to

focus beyond the implementation of the Basin Plan.

The Murray Darling Association's Strategic Plan 2016-19 has been valuable in guiding the organisation's efforts during the past year.



Preparations commenced this year for a new Strategic Plan 2020 and to review the regional boundaries of the MDA.

Significant investment was made in our communications and engagement capacities. This work will ensure our association remains future-focused with a modern, efficient structure positioned to provide maximum value to our members and stakeholders.

This report summarises what has been an exceptional year for the MDA, and clearly demonstrates the massive volume of work and priorities progressed by your association.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and leadership of David Thurley, and thank the board and all staff for their hard work and tireless commitment throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Emma Bradbury', written over a horizontal line.

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

SECTION 1: INTRODUCING OUR PILLARS FOR PERFORMANCE



OUR PURPOSE

To provide effective representation of local government and the communities we serve at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating informed debate, and seeking to influence government policy.

AND OUR VISION

A healthy Murray Darling Basin that supports thriving communities, economic development and sustainable productivity.



A HISTORY OF PERFORMANCE

The Murray Darling Association, formerly the Murray Valley Development League (MVDL), was founded in Yarrowonga in 1944 by local government representatives from across the region concerned to secure the overall development of the Murray Valley through the development and utilisation of its natural and potential resources to the maximum extent consistent with their wise conservation, through collaboration with their state and federal counterparts to inform and influence the development of policy.

The leadership of the organisation has, since its inception been founded in local government and has included Kerang-based councillor John Gorton who went on in 1968 to become Australia's 19th Prime Minister, and Jack McEwan who preceded him in that role.

Cr John Gorton and his MVDL colleagues were instrumental in driving the organisation's tenacious advocacy for legislation that resulted in the Snowy River diversion and associated hydro-electricity scheme.



GOING FOR IT!

Our purpose is to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the development of policy and the management of Murray-Darling Basin resources.

We do this through the sharing of accurate, relevant, and timely information; by facilitating informed debate; and by working to influence government policy.

Local government is one of three levels of government in Australia. We are the level of government most directly connected to the communities we serve.

Councils across the Basin have a valuable contribution to make in community consultation, in the continuing implementation of the Basin Plan, in the development of the carp control plan, in planning for sustainable development and renewable energy installations, and in the management of our Basin resources more broadly.

Local government has the technical capacity and local knowledge required to understand, balance, plan for, and serve the various and often competing needs and interests that exist within and across our local communities.

It is in the interest of every community in the Basin for local government to inform the decisions and policies of state and federal governments on issues that impact our rural and regional towns and communities.

Local governments' role in informing and influencing issues relevant to Basin communities extends far beyond the Basin Plan.

OUR ROLE

Our role as a peak representative body is to ensure local knowledge and networks inform and influence the development of policy and maximise the benefit to our local communities in the following areas:

- ▶ National plans
 - > Murray Darling Basin Plan
 - > State and Commonwealth environmental water management
 - > National Carp Control Plan
- ▶ Economic development opportunities
- ▶ Infrastructure investment in water storage, water delivery, transport, telecommunications
- ▶ Renewable energies
- ▶ Integrated planning
- ▶ Education and training
- ▶ Rural and regional collaborations
- ▶ Tourism and visitation.



Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Senator for South Australia. Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources addresses the 73rd National Conference in Renmark.

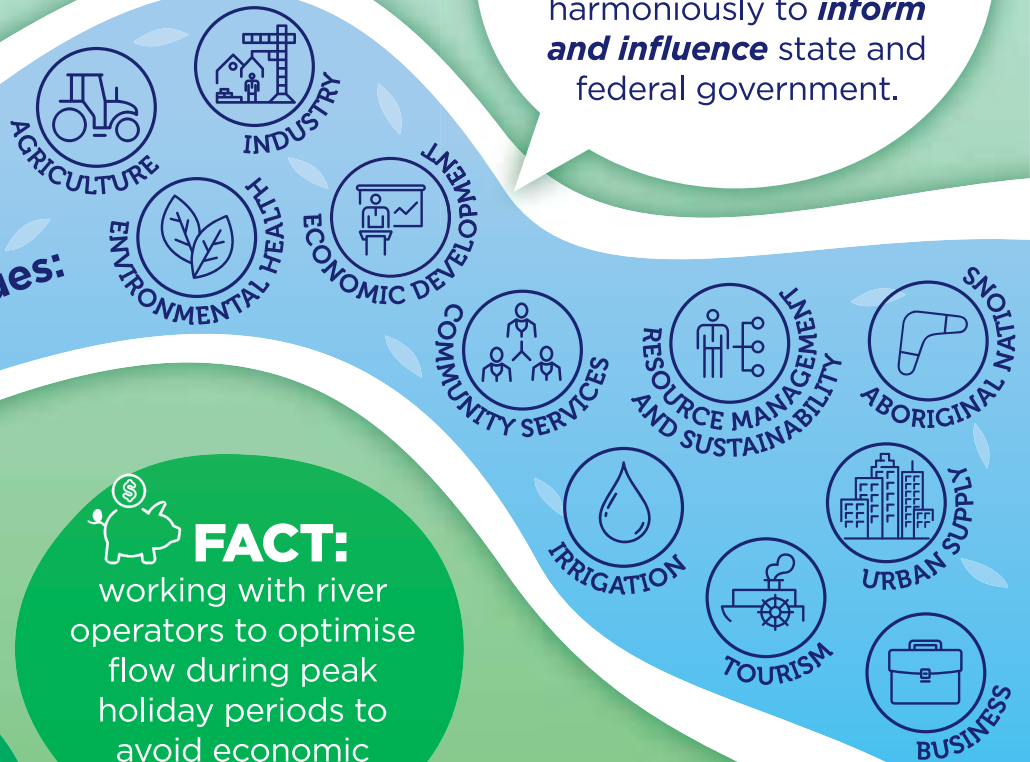


LOCAL PRIORITIES - NATIONAL INFLUENCE

The benefits of MDA participation are now flowing freely to all our regions.

The MDA is your peak body for local government in the management of Basin water resources, working harmoniously to **inform and influence** state and federal government.

Water plays a unique role in so many important local issues:



FACT: today's Basin Plan is world-leading watersharing legislation. Council influence is more important than ever!

FACT: working with river operators to optimise flow during peak holiday periods to avoid economic losses

FACT: we helped kick-start the Snowy scheme over 70 years ago!

FACT: partnering the National Carp Control Plan to engage councils about a better approach to feral fish management.

Local government united - to **inform and influence**.
Ensure your council's membership!

www.mda.asn.au / admin@mda.asn.au



SECTION 2: OUR ORGANISATION

OUR BOARD

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Chair Region 1 – <i>President</i>
Cr Peter Mansfield	Moira Shire Council	Chair Region 2
Mayor Leigh Byron	Balranald Shire Council	Chair Region 3
Cr Alan Mathers	Murray River Council	Chair Region 3
Mayor Darria Turley	Broken Hill City Council	Chair Region 4
Cr Melisa Hederick	Wentworth Shire Council	Chair Region 4
Cr Peter Hunter	Renmark Paringa Council	Chair Region 5
Cr Barry Featherston	Alexandrina Council	Chair Region 6 – <i>Vice President</i>
Cr David Shetliffe	Town of Walkerville	Chair Region 7
Cr Denis Clark	Northern Areas Council	Chair Region 8
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Chair Region 9
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Shire Council	Chair Region 11
Cr Richard Marsh	Balonne Shire Council	Chair Region 12
Pete George	M&S Group	<i>Treasurer</i>

	Meeting 366 July 6, 2017	Meeting 367 August 3, 2017	Meeting 368 September 7, 2017	Meeting 369 October 10, 2017	Meeting 370 November 27, 2017	Meeting 371 December 11, 2017	Meeting 372 January 31, 2018	Meeting 373 March 5, 2018	Meeting 374 March 26, 2018	Meeting 375 May 7, 2018	Meeting 376 June 18, 2018
Cr David Thurley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cr Peter Mansfield	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✗	✓	A	A	✓	✓
Mayor Leigh Byron	A	✓	✓	✓	A	A	✓	✓	A	✗	✗
Cr Alan Mathers	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Mayor Daria Turley	✓	A	✓	A	A	✓	A	✓	A	✗	✗
Cr Melisa Hederics	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	A	P
Cr Peter Hunter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	A	P
Cr Barry Featherston	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Cr David Shetliffe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
Cr Denis Clark	✓	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cr Paul Maytom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Cr John Campbell	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cr Richard Marsh	✓	A	A	A	✓	✓	P	✓	✓	✓	A
Pete George	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	A
Emma Bradbury*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Public Officer and Chief Executive Officer



STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The MDA has 12 regions across the basin covering 4 states and the ACT.

Each region is lead by the delegate of the chairing council, supported by a dedicated committee.

Each regional chair also holds a seat on the national board of the MDA. The board includes provision for a skills based treasurer to ensure the highest standards of financial performance and accountability.

The national board of the MDA meets monthly.

This year, the MDA welcomed Gunnedah Shire Council as the inaugural Chair of Region 11, seeing 11 out of the 12 regions of the MDA filled, providing active leadership across the Basin.



INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE AND SYSTEMS

- With a continuing commitment to good governance and innovative leadership, the board attended governance training presented by the Australian Institute of Company Directors in Albury, held in conjunction with the annual Strategic Planning Workshop.
- In 2017-18 MDA implemented a number of new internal reporting systems to track the deliverables against its strategic plan and resolved commitments. Systems designed to increase efficiency and accountability.
- We also invested in a SaaS package, Software as a Service, to assist with membership engagement. The software is web-based, providing member access via a portal, and enhanced communications capacity. Implementation of software is continuing, with a go-live date anticipated in late 2018.
- In our quest for continuous improvement and maximum efficiency, the MDA implemented and transitioned to Xero accounting software, achieving a seamless transition.
- MDA crosses the whole Basin. Use of innovation and technology enables us to do our job. Utilisation of digital meeting software decreases travel costs, increases efficiencies, builds better relationships and simply gets more done.



Mayor Adrian Western Campaspe Shire Council, Emma Bradbury MDA CEO, Cr David Thurley MDA National President, Daryl Hoey Chairman Australian Dairy Industry Council Water Task Force, Les Gordon Chairman National Farmers Federation Water Taskforce. Ms Bradbury addresses Basin Ministers in Mildura, 2017 on behalf of member councils.

LEADERSHIP AND BOARD OPERATION

With council amalgamations in NSW and a robust election process in SA, the year was particularly challenging for the local government sector.

This had both direct and indirect impacts on the operation of the MDA.

The association maintained its focus on innovative leadership, and worked hard to support councils across the sector, promoting an ethos of stability and continuity in the face of change.

The Murray Darling Association's board met eleven times during 2017-18. Three meetings were held face-to-face, with board members able to attend all gatherings digitally.

Copies of minutes available from the Murray Darling Association's website: mda.asn.au

WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

This year the MDA resolved to establish a Strategic Advisory Group consistent with Part 4 section 14 of the Murray Darling Association Constitution.

The group will be responsible for providing advice to the board in relation to resource planning, funding opportunities, development of Strategic Plan 2020, and review of the regional boundaries to optimise the MDA's alignment to existing local government and regional networks.

- Finance subcommittee
- Performance review and remuneration committee
- Policy advisory committee.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Australian Institute of Company Directors training session
- MDA Planning Workshop
- Annual Australian Governance Summit

*Helping
secure
the future*

Our programs and partnerships grow farm productivity and healthy environments and we play a vital role in helping to protect against pests, diseases and environmental threats. We connect our customers with the best services, advice and networks.

Local Land Services offers a range of specialist services, tailored for each community, industry and environment. We understand the needs of the communities we work with and we are well placed to deliver services that address local needs.

Our team is here when it matters, on the ground helping you with *knowledge, networks and local experience.*



Local Land
Services

1300 795 299 www.ils.nsw.gov.au

SECTION 3: OUR PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

The Productivity commission this year made inquiry into the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and water resource plans.

The Murray Darling Association was appointed to the stakeholder working group. The working group has an advisory role. Its purpose is to exchange information and views on progress towards implementing the actions required under the Basin Plan.

The working group is an important component of the Commission's consultation processes for this inquiry, with the MDA ensuring strong representation for the interests of local government. The working group has met three times since its establishment and will remain in place until the completion of the inquiry.

NATIONAL CARP CONTROL PLAN

The Murray Darling Association sits on the National Carp Control Plan communications working group. The National Carp Control Plan is tasked to investigate options for carp control in Australian waterways, including the possible release of a biological control, the carp herpes virus.

The communications working group is one of four teams working with National Carp Control Plan staff to identify a smart, safe, effective and integrated suite of measures to control carp impacts.

Matt Barwick, the plan's co-ordinator, has presented updates during region meetings held throughout the year.

MDA's participation in the group provides a conduit for current information, pathways for consultation and ensures the role and interests of local government across the Basin footprint is actively considered in the development of the Plan.

NATURAL RESOURCE ACCESS REGULATOR

Established by the NSW Government in February this year in response to recommendations in Ken Matthews' report into water management and compliance in NSW, and following allegations of illegal water extraction aired on the Four Corners report Pumped.

At the first meeting of the board of the NRAR, MDA was invited to provide a briefing on the perspectives and expectations of stakeholders across the Basin.

The MDA provided representative content to ensure that the views of local government inform and influence the operation of the NRAR, followed by a detailed submission via the public consultation process.

INCLUSION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF BASIN-RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The MDA continued to advocate for a formal role for local government in the institutional and governance arrangements underpinning plans and policies of regional and national significance including the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

NATURAL RESOURCE ACCESS REGULATOR

The NRAR is an independent regulator established on the recommendation of Ken Matthews to take over the enforcement of water regulation in NSW.

The MDA provided the Regulator with a detailed briefing on a range of actions our members believe should be taken to improve compliance and build trust. ALGA

DEFINING SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEUTRALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

THE MDA'S CONTINUING ADVOCACY

The Water Act 2007 provides for the recovery of an additional 450 gigalitres of water within the Murray-Darling Basin by 2024.

The Basin Plan sets a higher bar or threshold in relation to socio-economic impacts for the 450 GL of upwater as compared with other elements of water recovery.

Unlike the 2750 GL, recovery of the 450GL can only be achieved by means that are socio-economically neutral.

The issue has been the subject of many costly and often conflicting studies, analyses and reports often undertaken at great financial and emotional cost to communities only to be ignored. Or worse.

Our members argue that the problem lies not in whether or how the 450GL can be recovered, or even the impact of that recovery, although this is a major challenge for our state and federal governments and agencies.

The problem arises from the absence of a fair and equitable, agreed definition of socio-economic neutrality, and community confidence in the process of assessing it.

Socio-economic neutrality as it is currently defined in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is inconsistent with accepted definitions of socio-economic impacts and is also inconsistent with Commonwealth guidelines on socio-economic impact assessment.

It does not meet the overarching intent of the Basin Plan to consider the socio-economic impacts of upwater.

In order for all parties to remain committed and for the Basin Plan to be delivered on time and in full, confidence must be restored in governments' commitment to a triple-bottom line outcome. Trust and good faith must be restored in the process underpinning the SDLAM, and there must be agreement on the veracity of any definition or assessment of socio-economic neutrality.

In 2018, the MDA advocated strongly for the establishment of an agreed definition for socio-economic neutrality and a fair, equitable and agreed framework for assessing it on the context of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The association partnered with the CSIRO and the University of Canberra to develop a project proposal to establish an agreed definition for socio-economic neutrality, and a fair, equitable and agreed framework for assessing it.

Following strong advocacy from the Murray Darling Association, including briefing departments and the Basin officials committee, Basin ministers agreed at ministerial council to develop agreed additional program criteria, establishing a pathway to achieving the remaining water recovery of 450 gigalitres through efficiency measures with neutral or beneficial socio-economic outcomes.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The MDA exhibited at the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly in Canberra in mid-June, engaging with mayors and delegates from across the Basin to exchange local perspectives and expertise.

The event was a valuable opportunity for our members to engage face-to-face with colleagues across the Murray-Darling Basin, providing a better understanding of Basin-related issues to councils right across Australia.

NATIONAL PEAK BODIES STAKEHOLDER GROUP – MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

The MDA continued to participate in peak body briefings provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, ensuring members have direct access to accurate, relevant and timely information.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2017

Widely recognised as an outstanding event a record number of voting delegates attended the 73rd National Conference and Annual General Meeting, held at Renmark, South Australia, October 2017.

More than 140 mayors, councillors, officers and community members from the MDA's 12 regions gathered to engage with lead agencies, authorities and community leaders from across the Basin.

South Australian Water Minister Ian Hunter and Federal Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Anne Ruston were joined by high calibre presentations from water authorities, technical experts, and industry leaders.

The conference, themed *Our Plan, Our Future* also provided updates on projects such as the National Carp Control Plan and Snowy 2.0, and panel discussions on opportunities for structural adjustment to local economies, and the role of the barrages in achieving Basin Plan targets.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN ROYAL COMMISSION

The MDA made submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission, and was invited to testify to the submission.

NEW SOUTH WALES ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST AQUATIC SUB-COMMITTEE

Created to assess applications to the New South Wales Environmental Trust's River Connections program, the sub-committee first met in February 2018, with subsequent gatherings to occur annually.

The Murray Darling Association is one of four non-government organisations represented on the sub-committee, which also includes representation from the Australian Floodplain Association, Charles Sturt University and the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group.

WATER COMPLIANCE REVIEW

MDA members support numerous measures proposed under the Murray Darling Basin Water Compliance Review, including a no meter, no pump policy, improving clarity when pumping is permitted, restrictions on pumping when environmental water is released, and publishing enforcement activities undertaken by the regulator.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN: FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT

The Murray Darling Association is one of eight organisations, forming the Productivity Commission's stakeholder working group.

Formed in accordance with section 89 of the Water Act 2007, the working group provides a forum to exchange information and views on issues relevant to this inquiry.

Input from the working group will help the Productivity Commission develop a draft report, scheduled for release in August 2018.

The final version of the document will be presented to Parliament, December 2018.

WHAT DID WE DO FOR OUR MEMBERS?

- **represented** the sector on the Productivity Commission Working Group
- **represented** the sector at the MDBA National Peak Bodies Group
- **called for** local government to be provided a role in the institutional and governance arrangements informing the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- **called for** greater involvement of local government in the monitoring of water extraction
- **participated in** the call for greater compliance with and enforcement of water extraction regulations
- **commenced** the e-newsletter. Continuation of the Basin Bulletin, following on from the River Lander notes
- **73rd National Conference and AGM:** attendance numbers, build relationships, exhibitors, contribute to the national dialogue on the role of barrages, showcase business and industry
- **lead the call** for socio-economic impact assessment and analysis to consider cumulative impact of the Basin Plan and other factors
- **played a key role** in the return to bi-partisanship and stability following attempts to disallow the Basin Plan amendment
- **represented** the sector on the National Carp Control Plan communications working group
- **facilitated** presentations by the National Carp Control Plan Coordinator to over 100 councils
- **supported** collaborative testing between Edward River Council and Water NSW which reveals that blue-green algae levels have fallen, resulting in the lifting of a red alert warning for the Edward River at Deniliquin
- **continued to advocate** for local knowledge to inform the decisions that impact local communities
- **provided** over thirty detailed briefings and representations to Ministers, Members of Parliament, and their advisory staff
- **represented the sector** at the Basin officials committee advocating for the establishment of an agreed definition for socio-economic neutrality, and a fair, equitable and agreed framework for assessing it in the context of the Murray Darling Basin Plan
- **successfully collaborated** with the MDBA and the CEWH to optimise flow ranges over peak visitation periods to key tourism destinations
- **united** to oppose the disallowance motions and support the proposed amendments to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- **represented the sector** on the national peak bodies reference group - Murray-Darling Basin water compliance review
- **advocated** for consideration of local government representation on the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council and/or the Basin Officials Committee
- **participated** in the MDBA review of the Regional engagement officer program

- **contributed** to CEWO performance review
- **presented** at the LGNSW water management conference
- **successfully advocated** via the Basin Officials Committee and the Murray Darling Basin Authority to increase the level of local government expertise in the Basin community committee established under S 202 of the Water Act
- **attended** The Border Regional Organisation of Councils at St George.

SIGNIFICANT SUBMISSIONS MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS

The Productivity Commissions inquiry into the effectiveness of the implementation of the Basin Plan and Water Resource Plans

House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy's Inquiry into the Management and Use of Commonwealth Environmental Water

Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission

New South Wales Government Water Reform Action Plan

Victorian Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee's Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water

Basin Officials Committee nominations

MDA submission to the SDLAM Draft Determination Report.

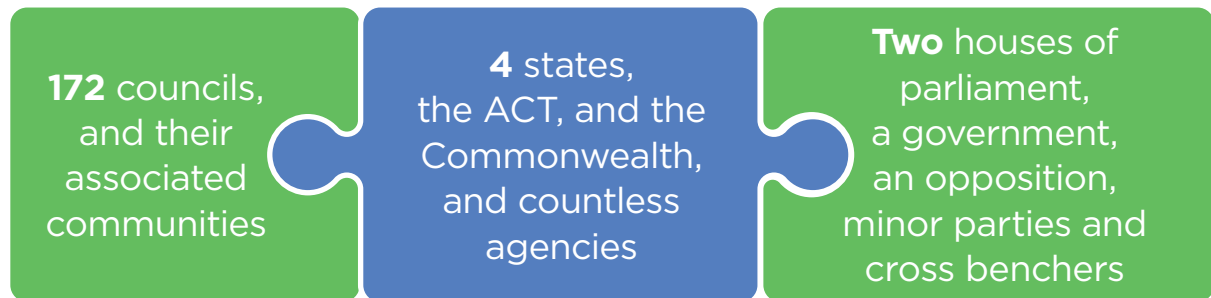


Stephen Smith Director of Policy LGASA, Ben Bruce Executive Director of Water DEWNR, Neil Andrew MDBA Chair, Matt Barwick National Carp Control Plan Co-ordinator and Emma Bradbury MDA Chief Executive Officer. The MDA shared perspective on local government's role in national plans at a LGASA forum.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT

We recognise there are:



across the Murray Darling Basin.



UNITED IN OUR DIVERSITY

Working across all four states of the Basin and the ACT, the MDA recognises the significant challenges to the management of inter-jurisdictional resources posed by regional differences.

The various states and territories manage their resources and relationships through the prism of state-based legislation, regulation and agency.

The diversity in topography, geography, hydrology and even history also combines to create enormous diversity in the language, perception, and experience of natural resource management across the Basin.

The MDA continues to recognise these challenges, utilising the common objectives of local government, maintaining disciplined and authorised advocacy and the highest levels of positive public profile for councils.

The Murray Darling Association has a strong record of communicating activities and

priorities to its members since its creation in 1944.

BASIN BULLETIN - E NEWSLETTER

The return of the *Basin Bulletin* in February 2018 builds on the legacy of the organisation's previous correspondence to members - *Murray Valley Newsletter* 1946, *Riverlander* 1947-85, *Riverlander Notes* 1986-2012 and *Basin Bulletin* 2012-14.

Distributed at the end of each month, *Basin Bulletin* includes updates on events that have occurred, coming appointments and reports from each region.

Issue	Month
7	February 2018
8	March 2018
9	April 2018
10	May 2018
11	June 2018

Please visit www.mda.asn.au to view past editions of *Basin Bulletin*.

MEDIA RELEASES

Date	Headline
25 Jul 2017	Murray Darling Association response to Four Corners report
13 Aug 2017	MDA backs calls for an Independent Public Inquiry into Basin Plan
17 Aug 2017	Call for clarity on future of Menindee Lakes
18 Aug 2017	Local government seeks answers over lack of consultation on buybacks
11 Sep 2017	Murray Darling Association welcomes interim report into NSW water management and compliance
29 Sep 2017	Murray Darling Association to call for Basin Plan solidarity at National Conference
19 Oct 2017	Solidarity characterises Murray Darling Association National Conference and AGM
2 Feb 2018	Councils unite to strengthen their influence on Basin management decisions
2 Feb 2018	Basin councils unite against disallowance motion
6 Feb 2018	Halt to water recovery, not the solution
13 Feb 2018	Local government commends bipartisanship on Basin Plan amendments
15 Feb 2018	Councils from across the Basin call on all governments to stay the course
20 Feb 2018	Basin Plan the best option for communities, the environment and regional economies
9 Mar 2018	Data shows social and economic impacts of water recovery
9 Mar 2018	MDA leadership team reinstated for the year ahead
14 Mar 2018	Local government encouraged by NSW Water Reform Action Plan
16 Mar 2018	Great result for collaboration between local government and water agency
22 Mar 2018	A return to the table expected under new SA Liberal government
3 May 2018	Murray-Darling Basin Plan essential to the health of the Coorong
8 May 2018	Local government welcomes return to bipartisanship on the Basin Plan
25 Jun 2018	Basin Plan impact report welcomed
25 Jun 2018	Local government leaders meet in Canberra
26 Jun 2018	Councils to deliberate economic neutrality and the 450GL

All media releases available for viewing on the MDA website

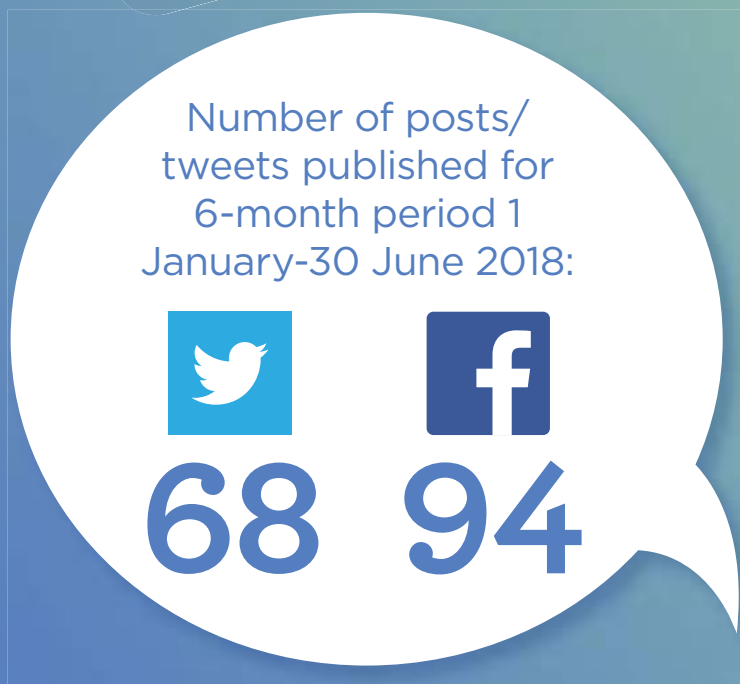
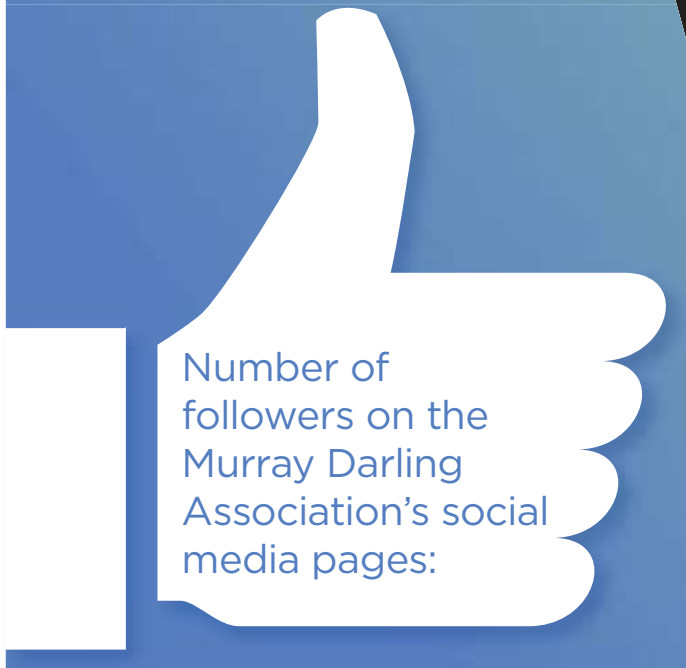
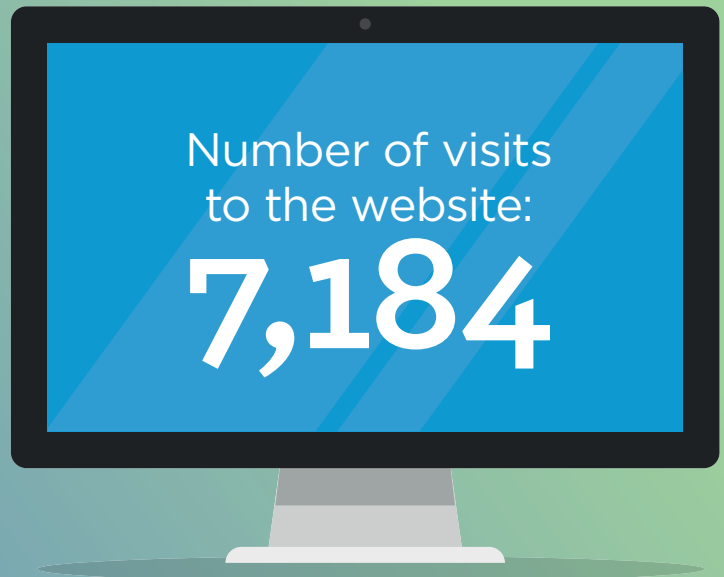
During 2017-18 the MDA continued to deliver a regular one hour segment on EMFM Echuca Moama Community Radio program Out and About with Ron Wood.



Above: Region 9 Murrumbidgee Region Meeting 2017.

Left: Dr Tom Rayner holds and adult carp caught during fish surveys of the Macquarie Marshes, NSW.

SOCIAL MEDIA



RELATIONSHIPS/ PARTNERSHIPS

The MDA is proud to be expanding our partnerships with members and stakeholders across the basin. In achieving value for and representing the interests of local government and our rural and regional communities across the Basin, the Murray Darling Association values our respectful and productive relationships with these and other partner governments, agencies, and organisations

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
LG NSW	Local Government NSW
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
RAMJO	Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation
MRLGA	Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association
BROC	Border Region Organisation of Councils
NAMOI JO	Namoi Joint Organisation
Member councils	
And more...	

GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES

Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
NSW Department of Industry
QLD Department of Energy and Water Supply
SA Department for Environment and Water
Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
Commonwealth Environmental Water Office
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation - CSIRO
Snowy Hydro
Murray Darling Basin Authority
And more...

IRRIGATION BUSINESSES

Murray Irrigation
Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area
Goulburn Murray Water
Southern Riverina Irrigators
And more...

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PEAK BODIES

National Irrigators Council
Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations
Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations
National Farmers Federation
Ricegrowers Association
NSW Irrigators Council
Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists
Cotton Australia
And more...

OTHER

Australian Institute of Company Directors
University of Canberra
Charles Sturt University
McArthurs
Russell Kennedy Lawyers
M&S Group Accounting
Seftons
And more...

Proud exhibitors and contributors to our conference and AGM in Leeton 2018.



SECTION 4:
OUR
PERFORMANCE,
REGION BY REGION

REPORT ON THE REGIONS

INTRODUCTION

This year saw a small increase in overall council membership numbers, halting the steady decline of almost a decade.

Out of the 172 municipalities located within the Murray-Darling Basin, 71 or 42pc are financial members of the Murray Darling Association.

Municipal amalgamations in New South Wales during 2016-17 altered the number of councils located in the Basin, and the membership figures for Regions 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11.

Despite this, NSW still boasts the largest representation of financial members, with thirty municipalities supporting the Murray Darling Association, followed by South Australia with twenty-eight.

Six Victorian municipalities are financial members, while four of the 15 Queensland-based municipalities located in the Basin are members.

Located in South Australia's Riverland, Region 5 boasts the greatest percentage of support from councils located in the area, with all five municipalities being financial members and active participants.

Adelaide's Region 7, the only metropolitan region, has the largest membership number, with 12 out of the 20 councils being active supporters of the Murray Darling Association.

While council participation increased, individual memberships declined from just over 30 to around 20.

Financial sustainability of the association is a critical issue that will need to be addressed as the organisation goes forward.

The MDA maintains the highest level of financial prudence and accountability. Operating with an exceedingly high level of efficiency, delivering value to members, stakeholders and government agencies alike.

The association engages through a vast network of member councils across the Basin, providing disciplined and authoritative advocacy informed by local knowledge and expertise.

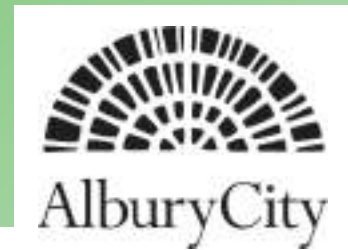
Your MDA continues to provide a forum through which councils across the Basin can collaborate to develop shared understanding of regional issues and formulate solutions that provide maximum benefit and value to ratepayers and agencies alike.

Our association continues to provide an effective conduit between local government and state and federal policy-makers, to deliver more informed policy solutions.

However, in order to be sustainable and continue to deliver on purpose, utility of this network requires adequate resourcing.

In 2018, the board resolved to establish a Strategic Advisory Group, with a key requirement to explore this issue of enhanced utilisation of existing local government networks and relationships.

ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 1



Region 1 comprises a total of 14 councils, of which 6 are members of the MDA. We have 1 life member. The committee is made up of

Cr David Thurley
(Chair) *Albury City Council*

Cr David Wortmann
(Vice Chair) *Towong Shire Council*

Three meetings were held during the year.

August 25, 2017 *Albury*

January 30, 2018 *Albury*

May 25, 2018 *Albury*

A guest speaker addressed members at each meeting. Topics covered were environmental water management, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system itself.

Speakers were:

- Dr Terry Hillman AM
Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientist
- Luke Pearce, Fisheries Manager,
Aquatic Ecosystems, NSW DPI Fisheries
- Paul Childs, Senior Environmental Water Manager,
NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Some great successes have been seen as a result of environmental water releases to provide water to wetlands and particularly the use of such water to encourage native fish breeding.

Councils across the region are also benefiting from aligning with the Murray Darling Association to focus on local issues, such as the use of groundwater for bottled water.

MEMBER COUNCILS

Albury City Council
Federation Council
Greater Hume Shire Council
Wodonga City Council
Towong Shire Council
Snowy Valleys Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Alpine Shire Council
Baw Baw Shire Council
Benalla Rural City Council
East Gippsland Shire Council
Indigo Shire Council
Mansfield Shire Council
Snowy Monaro Regional Council
Wangaratta Rural City Council

Cr David Thurley
Chair, Region 1.



ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 2



Region 2 comprises a total of 12 councils, of which 5 are members of the MDA. We have 4 life members, as well as 1 individual member. The committee is made up of

Cr Peter Mansfield
(Chair) *Moirira Shire Council*

Cr Ross Bodey *Berrigan Shire*

Cr Denis Patterson *City of Greater Shepparton*

One meeting occurred during 2017-18, held on June 15, 2018 at *Cobram*. National Carp Control Plan co-ordinator, Matt Barwick was the guest presenter.

The past year has been very eventful in relation to water management issues. The recovery of 605 gigalitres from off-farm efficiencies, as well as the commitment to greater requirement for socio-economic neutrality in the 450-gigalitre water recovery target, are great steps forward.

More work needs to be done to understand the impact of the hydrology of the Murray River – in particularly, the Barmah Choke.

MEMBER COUNCILS

Berrigan Shire Council
Edward River Council
Greater Bendigo City Council
Greater Shepparton City Council
Moirira Shire Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Campaspe Shire Council
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Mitchell Shire Council
Murrindindi Shire Council
Strathbogie Shire Council
Whittlesea City Council
Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Cr Peter Mansfield
Chair, Region 2.



Cr Samantha O'Toole of Balonne Shire Council, R12 catches up with Cr Peter Mansfield of Moirira Shire Council, Chair R2. Sharing expertise and experience from the Northern Basin to the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 3



Region 3 comprises a total of 15 councils, of which 3 are members of the MDA.

One meeting occurred in 2017-18, held at *Wedderburn* on June 14, 2018.

Mayor Leigh Byron retired from the Regional Chairs position in April 2018. Mayor Byron chaired the region since 2016, providing stability and consistent leadership.



Mayor Leigh Byron of Balranald Shire retired from the role of Region 3 chair in April 2018. His stable and consistent leadership was warmly acknowledged.

MEMBER COUNCILS

Balranald Shire Council
Loddon Shire Council
Murray River Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Ararat Rural City Council
Ballarat City Council
Buloke Shire Council
Central Goldfields Shire Council
Gannawarra Shire Council
Hepburn Shire Council
Horsham Rural City Council
Moorabool Shire Council
Mount Alexander Shire Council
Northern Grampians Shire
Pyrenees Shire Council
Swan Hill Rural City Council

- Australia's peak body representing 1200 cotton growers & industry
- Serving 150 cotton communities from Central Queensland to Swan Hill
- Australia's 2016/17 cotton crop worth \$2.3 billion
- An essential advocate for farmers and industry for more than 40 years



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ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 4



Region 4 comprises a total of 7 councils, of which 4 are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of

Mayor Melisa Hederics (Chair)	<i>Wentworth Shire Council</i>
Mayor Darriea Turley	<i>Broken Hill City Council</i>
Cr Jane MacAllister	<i>Wentworth Shire Council</i>
Cr Jason Modica	<i>Mildura Rural City Council</i>

Two meetings were held during the year.

August 14, 2017	<i>Wentworth</i>
April 18, 2018	<i>Dareton</i>

This year Region 4 has engaged with Murray-Darling Basin matters with renewed energy. Region 4 meetings were held on 14 August 2017 when Broken Hill Mayor Daria Turley was Region 4 Chair and 18 April 2018, when Wentworth Mayor Melisa Hederics was appointed. Our focus for the year has been on greater engagement and collaboration with State government and neighbouring MDA regions to drive positive outcomes relating to water issues. This included submissions in April 2018 to:

- The Productivity Commissions' Five-year assessment of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- The South Australian Royal Commission
- Securing our Water : NSW Government Water Reform Action Plan

MEMBER COUNCILS

Broken Hill City Council
Central Darling Shire
Mildura Rural City Council
Wentworth Shire Council
OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS
Hindmarsh Shire Council
West Wimmera Shire Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council

Areas of concern this year have been the environmental impact of the Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline project, management and impact of the Menindee Lakes Water Storage and preparing for a third expected cease to flow event in the last 5 years. The positive impact of Region 4 is demonstrated by the successful negotiation for two extra earthen block banks to be created between Menindee and Pooncarie, as well the two downstream of Pooncarie to be replaced 22 months after their removal, which will capture diminished flows for stock and domestic use.

Mayor Melisa Hederics
Chair, Region 4.





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74th National Conference and Annual General Meeting*



ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 5



Region 5 comprises a total of 5 councils, all of which are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of

Cr Peter Hunter (Chair)	<i>Renmark Paringa Council</i>
Cr Andrew Kassebaum	<i>Berri Barmera Council</i>
Cr Mark Ward	<i>District Council of Loxton Waikerie</i>
Cr Peter Raison	<i>Mid Murray Council</i>
Cr Adriaan Sakko	<i>Mid Murray Council</i>
Cr Jack Gibb	<i>Renmark Paringa Council</i>
Cr Allan Maddocks	<i>Renmark Paringa Council</i>
Ian Mann	<i>Individual member</i>

Five meetings were held during the year.

July 10, 2017	Berri
September 27, 2017	Morgan
December 11, 2017	Renmark
March 19, 2018	Berri
May 14, 2018	Waikerie

Our year commenced with a review of the 2017 MDA AGM, which was held in the Riverland, SA. We were able to pass on some of our learnings from this event to Leeton and we wish them to have even greater successes with the 2018 event.

With strong support from so many of our fellow MDA Members and local partners the Conference was an exceptional success.

Meetings rotated among four of our council areas. Guest speakers at each meeting presented on important issues stimulating discussion. Speakers included CEWO (Michelle Campbell), MDBA Engagement Officer (Monica White), SA Department of Environment & Water (Brad Holliss), Riverine Recovery/ SARFIIP (Glenn Shimmin) and NCCP (Matt Barwick).

MEMBER COUNCILS

Berri Barmera Council
District Council of Karoonda East Murray
District Council of Loxton Waikerie
Mid Murray Council
Renmark Paringa Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Region 5 holds full council membership

Speakers built upon the discussions emanating from initial input by our CEO, Emma Bradbury and linked with position papers on topics such as the SA Royal Commission, SDL Adjustments and support for the Renmark Paringa Proposal to investigate through the Blue Economy Methodology (Gunter Pauli) re aspects of Carp Removal & Disposal.

Region 5 developed and adopted a 'priorities' paper formed from input by members and agreed to by all councils. The paper lists a broad range of aspirational priorities led by the need for the MDB Plan in full and on time. It is a useful basis for our future meetings, plans and actions.

The past year has been a very active one in terms of the 'politics of water'. We would like to recognize the vital importance of our CEO, Emma Bradbury in managing communications, priority issues, the board meetings & generally supporting Region 5 within the Murray Darling Association.

I would like to thank all councils and members of the Region for their input and support in 2018.

Peter Hunter
Chair, Region 5.



ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 6

Region 6 comprises a total of 7 councils, of which 4 are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of:

Cr Barry Featherston (Chair)	<i>Alexandrina Council</i>
Cr Julie Barry (Deputy Chair)	<i>Coorong District Council</i>
Keith Loeser	<i>Individual member</i>

The Chief Executive Officers of Alexandrina Council, The Rural City of Murray Bridge and the City of Victor Harbour round out the committee.

Five meetings were held during the year.

August 18, 2017	Tailem Bend
November 14, 2017	Tailem Bend
February 16, 2018	Goolwa
April 27, 2018	Alexandrina
June 15, 2018	Murray Bridge

This year has been an exciting and productive time for Region 6, with the level of commitment and collaboration displayed by our member councils achieving a heightened level of maturity and effectiveness.

Following our AGM in November 2017, we undertook a strategic planning session facilitated by an external consultant. The resultant report has helped the region to identify and focus on those issues of most importance to our community. This report now drives the agendas at our Regional meetings.

Earlier in 2017, three of the region's members councils - Alexandrina Council, Coorong District Council and Rural City of Murray Bridge - resolved to jointly fund the employment of a part-time Executive Officer for the region. Shen Mann was appointed in February 2018 and is being hosted by Alexandrina Council for a 12-month period.

Issues at the top of our agenda include regional water quality, carp control,

MEMBER COUNCILS

Alexandrina Council
Coorong District Council
The Rural City of Murray Bridge
Tatiara District Council
OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS
Kingston District Council
Southern Mallee District Council
City of Victor Harbour

restoration of the Coorong South Lagoon, the future of the barrages in a changing climate and of course, full and timely implementation of the Basin Plan. This includes a continued focus on recovery of the 450GL of environmental water needed to bolster the economic and ecological resilience our region. The region has also endorsed a detailed Engagement & Communications Strategy, implementation of which will enhance our status as a trusted source of information and a recognised and effective advocate for the Lower Murray, Lakes & Coorong region.

On the achievement front, Region 6 has been a consistent and vocal advocate in support of full and timely implementation of the Basin Plan. We provided detailed submissions to both the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission, driven by the South Australian Government and the Productivity Commission's 5-year assessment of the Basin Plan. The region's Mayors have been active in local, state and national media with many radio and newspaper appearances, speaking and commenting on issues crucial to our communities.

In June 2018, Alexandrina Council was successful in having a motion passed at the 2018 National General Assembly of Local Government calling on all levels of government to recommit to full and timely implementation of the Basin Plan and for



local government to be given a formal role in Basin Plan decision-making.

With a united voice, the region has called for the State Government to take the lead in commencing a comprehensive climate change adaptation planning process for the Coorong and Lower Lakes. This will continue to be an important priority for our region in the year to come, as our new Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon. David Speirs MP, takes the lead in developing an action plan for restoring the health of the Coorong South Lagoon. The planning needs to start now so that the benefits can be reaped in the medium and long term future. We have just seen a positive response from the new State Liberal Government and we will be included in the process through our local Councils.

With an extremely dry season so far in 2018, our primary producers are bracing themselves for potentially difficult times ahead. In a changing climate, communities up and down the river are all in the process of adjusting to a future with less water. Region 6 looks forward to working together with our colleagues across the Basin to achieve meaningful results for the health of the river and the communities which rely upon it for their prosperity and wellbeing.

Cr Barry Featherston
Chair, Region 6.



Australian Government



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ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 7

The Adelaide Metro Region comprises 12 councils, two life members and four individual members. The committee is made up of:

Cr David Shetliffe (Chair)	<i>Town of Walkerville</i>
Cr Lynda Yates, (Secretary)	<i>City of Holdfast Bay</i>
Cr Arthur Mangos	<i>City of West Torrens</i>
Cr Shirley Halls	<i>City of Playford</i>
Ms Pauline Frost	<i>(Life Member)</i>
Mr Frank Verrall	<i>Private Member</i>

Four meetings were held during the year.

24 August 2017	<i>Town of Walkerville</i>
23 November 2017	<i>City of Campbelltown</i>
22 February 2018	<i>City of Holdfast Bay</i>
24 May 2018	<i>City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters</i>

Two speakers addressed members at each meeting. Topics covered were a mixture of activities by local government in managing water use, including water sensitive urban design and storm water recharge schemes, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system itself.

Speakers were:

- Ms Kiki Magro, CEO,
Town of Walkerville and
Mr Nathan Silby, Director,
Walbridge, Gilbert Aztec – *ERA Water*
- Mr Matthew Barwick,
National Carp Control Coordinator
- Mr Henry Haarvisto, Manager Urban Trees,
City of Campbelltown
- Ms Monique White, Regional Engagement
Officer, *MDBA*
- Dr Anne Jensen, Environmental Consultant
– *rehabilitating wetlands in the Basin*
- Ms Melissa Bradley, Program Manager,
Water Sensitive SA

MEMBER COUNCILS

Adelaide City Council
City of Burnside
Campbelltown City Council
City of Holdfast Bay
City of Mitcham
City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters
City of Onkaparinga
City of Playford
City of Port Adelaide Enfield
City of Tea Tree Gully
Town of Walkerville
City of West Torrens

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

City of Charles Sturt
Town of Gawler
City of Marion
The District Council of Mount Barker
City of Prospect
City of Salisbury
City of Unley
District Council of Yankalilla
Adelaide Hills Council

- Professor Sarah Wheeler, University of
Adelaide – *research into farm exits*
- Mr Brenton Gear, Regional Director
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM.

Our thanks go to all the member councils which hosted meetings and especially to our speakers who willingly gave their time and expertise to help inform our members about key issues affecting water supply and security for the Adelaide metropolitan area.

The region also developed and adopted three significant documents.



An 11 point outline of the role of the region was adopted. In summary, the document set out priorities for adopting water saving measures and sharing experiences across Adelaide and the Basin. It suggested there should be a process for greater understanding of Adelaide's water supply and water use and management across all regions. It called for promotion and understanding of the economic importance of the river Murray in SA and the broader Murray Darling Basin.

A report was adopted outlining Adelaide's water use over time and the amount of water derived from each of the five major sources of water for Adelaide - the Mt Lofty Ranges catchments, the River Murray, the desalination plant, storm water recharge schemes and waste water recycling. This overview highlighted significantly lower water usage in Adelaide since the millennial drought, that around 60% of Adelaide's water comes from the Murray on average, but this represent only around 1% of the overall offtake from the Murray Darling system.

The Region also made a written submission to the SA Royal Commission enquiry into the Murray Darling Basin.

The Region put forward a motion to the MDA AGM in September calling for independent auditing of compliance across the Basin. This was passed unanimously.

Finally, I thank our member councils for their involvement and participation in our activities. I thank our committee for their support, particularly Cr Lynda Yates for her work in taking minutes, sending out agendas etc. I also acknowledge the support I have received from the CEO of my own Council, Ms Kiki Magro.

Cr David Shetliffe
Chair, Adelaide Metro Region.



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ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 8



Region 8 comprises a total of 16 councils, of which six are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of:

Mayor Denis Clark
(Chair) Northern Areas Council

Committee
members

No meetings were held during 2017-18.

The highlight of the past year was the 73rd National Conference, held at Renmark.

All councils within the region are located outside the Murray-Darling Basin. However, with our communities reliant on water from within the Basin, work will continue to increase participation with councils committed to the effective management of the resources of the Murray-Darling Basin through active participation via the Murray Darling Association.

MEMBER COUNCILS

The Barossa Council
District Council of Barunga West
The Regional Council of Goyder
Light Regional Council
Northern Areas Council
The District Council of Peterborough

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Adelaide Plains Council
Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council
District Council of the Copper Coast
The District Council of Mount Remarkable
District Council of Orroroo/ Carrieton
District Council of Yorke Peninsula
Port Augusta City Council
Port Pirie Regional Council
Wakefield Regional Council
Whyalla City Council

Mayor Denis Clark
Chair, Region 8.



ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 9



Region 9 comprises a total of 18 councils and the Australian Capital Territory, of which 8 are members of the MDA. We have 1 life member and 3 individual members. The committee is made up of

Mayor Paul Maytom (Chair)	Leeton Shire Council
Cr Dino Zappacosta	Griffith City Council
Cr Wesley Hall	Narrandera Shire Council
Joe Burns	Individual member
Bede Mecham	Life Member
Cr Paul Funnell	Wagga Wagga Council

Three meetings were held during the year

December 12, 2017	Leeton
February 15, 2018	Leeton
May 17, 2018	Leeton

It has been a very productive year in Region 9. There have been three meetings held over the last 12 months where there have been a number of presentations.

Phil Townsend, Acting Chief Economist from the Murray Darling Association (MDBA) presented on the socioeconomic impacts within our region. While we appreciate the effort put into this analysis, questions remain on the calculations and the impacts on some communities.

Jody Rudd, General Manager of Assets at Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) addressed members on the current MI projects to create more efficient and effective delivery and use of water, and on Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operations Program (PIIOP). Funding received into our region for major water infrastructure upgrades totals over \$347M to date.

PIIOP projects will allow private irrigation infrastructure operators and their customers to reduce water losses and manage their water allocations more efficiently.

Region 9 appreciated the contribution of MDBA Regional Engagement Officer Liz Stott who provided some very informative

MEMBER COUNCILS

Australian Capital Territory Government
Griffith City Council
Hay Shire Council
Leeton Shire Council
Lockhart Shire Council
Narrandera Shire Council
Temora Shire Council
Murrumbidgee Shire Council
Wagga Wagga City Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Bega Valley Shire Council
Carrathool Shire Council
Coolamon Shire Council
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Gundagai Regional Council
Hilltops Shire Council
Junee Shire Council
Murrumbidgee Council
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Weddin Shire Council
Yass Valley Council

presentations to Region 9 during her time in the role, which has now concluded.

Region 9 opposed the disallowance motions for the Basin Plan amendments and continued to challenge the 450-gigalitre up water process to determine how this water will be recovered with no negative impacts to our community.

During the year I attended several Murrumbidgee Environmental Water Advisory Group (EWAG) Meetings to be kept informed of environmental watering and the monitoring and evaluations in the watering programs.

Mayor Paul Maytom
Chair, Region 9.



ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 10



Council amalgamations in NSW have challenged the finite resources in that state. Dubbo Regional Council retired from the chair in advance of the amalgamations process leaving a vacancy in the leadership of this region.

Discussions with key councils and joint organisations in region 10 on leadership for this region commenced late in the financial year.

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

MEMBER COUNCILS

Bourke Shire Council
Cobar Shire Council
Dubbo Regional Council
Forbes Shire Council
Lachlan Shire Council
Mid-Western Regional Council
Narromine Shire Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Bathurst Regional Council
Bland Shire Council
Blayney Shire Council
Bogan Shire Council
Cabonne Council
Cowra Shire Council
City of Lithgow Council
Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Gilgandra Shire Council
Lithgow City Council
Muswellbrook Shire Council
Oberon Council
Orange City Council
Parkes Shire Council
Singleton Shire Council
Upper Hunter Shire Council
Upper Lachlan Shire Council
Warren Shire Council
Warrumbungle Shire Council

TRUST AND PROCESS



People are more likely to accept the results of government, agency and community initiatives, if they, or people they trust, are involved in developing the process.

Even if the results are not what they expect, our communities are more likely to trust these results, if they trust the process.

MDA is committed to developing an agreed process for consultation and collaboration, including methodology and definition, on plans and initiatives of national significance that impact the communities we serve.

Our aim is to increase both the perception and reality, of fairness, equity, independence and rigour of implementation.

ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 11



In 2018 Gunnedah Shire Council nominated and was awarded the position of inaugural chair for Region 11, providing local leadership for the first time.

Region 11 comprises a total of 15 councils, of which 6 are members of the MDA. We have 1 life member.

Gunnedah Shire Council is committed to engage and develop input on local matters, recognising that these efforts will reap excellent return on member councils' investment.

Cr John Campbell
Chair, Region 11.



MEMBER COUNCILS

Brewarrina Shire Council
Coonamble Shire Council
Gunnedah Shire Council
Gwydir Shire Council
Moree Plains Shire Council
Walgett Shire Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Armidale Dumaresq Council
Glen Innes Severn Council
Inverell Shire Council
Liverpool Plains Shire
Narrabri Shire Council
Tamworth Regional Council
Tenterfield Shire Council
Uralla Shire Council
Walcha Council



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ANNUAL REPORT: REGION 12



Region 12 comprises a total of 15 councils, of which 4 are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of

Mayor Richard Marsh	<i>Balonne Shire Council</i>
	<i>Goondiwindi Regional Council</i>
	<i>Paroo Shire Council</i>
	<i>Toowoomba Regional Council</i>

The inaugural meeting occurred on August 2, 2017, Roma

Two speakers addressed members at this meeting – National Carp Control Plan co-ordinator, Matt Barwick and Murray-Darling Basin Authority Chief Economist, Colin Mues.

My first year as MDA Region 12 Chairman has been a busy one with many highs and lows.

This has largely centred on the uncertainty of the Murray Darling Basin Northern Basin Review and the significant economic and social impacts to the communities of St George and Dirranbandi. These communities, located in the Balonne Shire, were recognised in the Review along with the New South Wales communities of Warren and Collarenebri as the four most disadvantaged communities in the Northern Basin.

As Balonne Shire Mayor and Region 12 Chairman, we have been at the forefront in negotiations with and representations to relevant State and Federal politicians concerning the Northern Basin Review recommendation that the Northern Basin water recovery target be reduced from 390GL to 320GL and the importance of this being passed in the Parliament. After suffering some initial concerns at the Senate level, I am pleased that through the bi-partisan agreement between the Coalition and the Australian Labour Party this reduction has now been passed into law by the Federal Parliament. This gives our region the certainty necessary for

MEMBER COUNCILS

Balonne Shire Council
Goondiwindi Regional Council
Paroo Shire Council
Toowoomba Regional Council

OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNCILS

Blackall Tambo Regional Council
Bulloo Shire Council
Central Highlands Regional Council
Lockyer Valley Regional Council
Maranoa Regional Council
Murweh Shire Council
Quilpie Shire Council
Scenic Rim Regional Council
South Burnett Regional Council
Southern Downs Regional Council
Western Downs Regional Council

our communities to begin rebuilding and looking forward to developing a more stable economic future.

Region 12 held its successful inaugural meeting on 2 August 2017 with representation from Central Highlands Regional Council, Maranoa Regional Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council and Balonne Shire Council. MDA CEO Emma Bradbury attended to explain the Association's role and how it can help our member councils. There were also presentations from National Carp Council and Murray Darling Basin Authority. It was pleasing to see member councils make time to travel quite some distance to attend this inaugural event.

Mayor Richard Marsh
Chair, Region 12.



HOW DOES MY COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT INFORM PUBLIC POLICY?



your council has a **direct input** into **your region**



regions meet quarterly to share information and identify shared priorities



monthly board meetings – region chairs collaborate to develop whole-of-Basin perspectives and pursue strategic priorities



annual national conference – a world class event



engagement between MDA national executive and state and federal stakeholders, including government, agencies and LGAs



two-way dialogue, broad-based networking and collaboration.

SECTION 5: OUR PEOPLE

STAFF

The Murray Darling Association continues to invest in skilled and talented people. Leadership and professionalism drive high performance with a focus on nurturing the next generation of talent.

Our high performance has this, as in every year, been essential.

With vast areas of topic and geography to cover, maximum use is made of the efficiencies afforded by modern technologies.

In total, the MDA undertook its business during the 2017-18 year employing FTE staff of 1.8.



Emma Bradbury B.Soc.Sci, Grad Dip Ed, GAICD
- Chief Executive Officer

Joining the Murray Darling Association in May 2014, Emma has extensive experience in business management, strategic planning, and organisational reform.

With a background in social science and local government, Emma is committed to the principals and practice of good governance and public participation.



Angus Verley B.Comms (Jnl)
- Senior Officer

A member of the Murray Darling Association's staff from August 2017 to May 2018, Angus Verley became a renowned point of contact for members.

Angus left his role with the MDA to further his career in journalism. He is currently the rural reporter at ABC Western Victoria and remains a committed and articulate champion for Basin issues.



Scott Bourne - BA(Comms)Hons
- Communications and administration officer

The Murray Darling Association's newest employee, Scott began in the role in June this year, taking over from former Senior Officer, Angus Verley.



Rachel Robinson-Minogue (Dip Trsm Bus)
- Communications and Digital Manager

Rachel brings over 16 years' experience in digital communications of local government and tourism along the River Murray corridor.

Working on a casual basis, Rachel maintains and grows the Murray Darling Association's digital assets and communications campaigns that support and enhance engagement with members and stakeholders.



Nathan Gillie
- Volunteer

One of the Murray-Darling Association's longest serving employees, Nathan works one afternoon a week at the Echuca office scanning media for items that are relevant to Murray-Darling Basin issues. Nathan carries out his duties with the support of carer Kerry Bliss.

An Occupational Health and Safety committee member, Nathan has previously addressed the national board and attended the Murray Darling Association's 72nd National Conference and Annual General Meeting, held at Dubbo.



Annette Waters
- Administration trainee

A year 12 VCE student at Rochester Secondary College, Annette works one day a week in our Echuca office.

Commencing March 2017, Annette is a school-based trainee (SBAT) working to complete her Certificate III in Business Administration.



BUILDING GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE: THE RIGHT SKILLS MIX

Experienced accountant Peter George of M+S Group was appointed the Murray Darling Association's first skills-based treasurer in 2017, marking a new era in financial administration for the organisation.

Mr George's appointment to the MDA Board as a skills-based treasurer is allowed under Part 4 s8(3) of the 2016 Constitution, and sees the association's continuing commitment to sound governance, with the composition of the board viewed as a strategic asset to the association.

Peter is Senior Accountant and Partner of M+S Group Accounting Pty Ltd, the largest accounting firm in rural Victoria.

He brings a wealth of energy and experience, and a commitment to the principles and purpose of the MDA.

Peter's contribution at board level will be key to the development of a strong and sustainable financial strategy for the association.

As with so much of the incredibly valuable professional and technical expertise that is contributed to the MDA, Peter's time and skills are generously provided for the benefit of our Basin communities.



Cr Arthur Mangos and Cr David Shetliffe - R7 Adelaide Metro.



Study tour participants gained an insight into river flows in Renmark.



Pete George, Angus Verley and Bernadette Abuda at the 73rd National Conference.



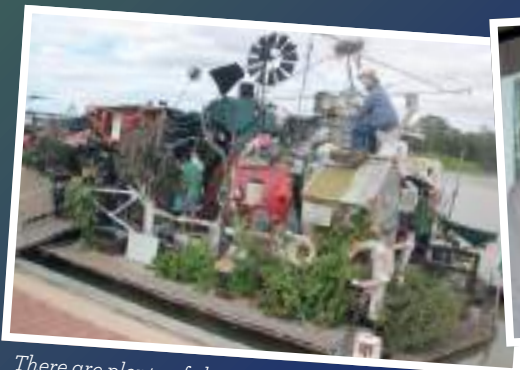
Brewarrina Mayor Phil O'Connor and Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury - water's not all serious.



From left: Andrew Beal (Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources), Tim Whetstone (Member for Chaffey), Emma Bradbury (Murray Darling Association chief executive officer), Bruce G. Thom (Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists), Andrew Reynolds (Murray Darling Basin Authority) and Ashley Bland.



Scott Bourne at the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly.



There are plenty of characters on the Murray River.



Jackson Wickham with Murray Darling Association National President, Cr David Thurley.



Murray Darling Association National President, Cr David Thurley with Adrian Wells and Ray Najjar.

SECTION 6: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your Committee members submit the financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The names of committee members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Name	Position	Dates
Cr David Thurley	National President	
Cr Barry Featherston	Vice President	
Peter George	Treasurer	
Cr David Thurley	Chair Region 1	
Cr Peter Mansfield	Chair Region 2	
Cr Leigh Byron	Chair Region 3	July 1st 2017 - April 30th 2018
Cr Alan Mathers	Chair Region 3	May 1st 2017 - June 30th 2018
Cr Darriea Turley	Chair Region 4	
Cr Peter Hunter	Chair Region 5	
Cr Barry Featherston	Chair Region 6	
Cr David Shetliffe	Chair Region 7	
Cr Denis Clark	Chair Region 8	
Cr Paul Maytom	Chair Region 9	
Vacant	Chair Region 10	
Cr John Campbell	Chair Region 11	March 1st 2018 - June 30 2018
Cr Richard Marsh	Chair Region 12	
Emma Bradbury	Public Officer	

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were:

To provide effective representation of local government and communities of the Murray Darling Basin at state and federal level in the management of Basin Resources by providing information, facilitating informed debate, and seeking to influence government policy.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the financial year.

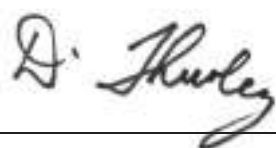
OPERATING RESULT

The surplus / (loss) after providing for income tax for the financial year amounted to (\$23,137) - [2017 \$20,453]

GOING CONCERN

This financial report has been prepared on a going concern basis which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business. The ability of the association to continue to operate as a going concern is dependent upon the ability of the association to generate sufficient cashflows from operations to meet its liabilities. The members of the association believe that the going concern assumption is appropriate.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee on:



David Thurley - National President



Peter George - Treasurer

Dated: 18th July 2018

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018	2017
INCOME			
Conference Income		66,499	37,954
Income - Memberships	2	200,242	199,057
Income - Projects		1,867	4,323
Income From Fundraising Events		100	27
Interest Income	3	1,436	685
Other Income	4	12,523	5,738
Total Income		282,667	247,784
EXPENDITURE			
DEPRECIATION			
Depreciation - Low Value Pool		280	448
Depreciation - Motor Vehicle		4,170	5,560
Depreciation - Software		4,951	-
Depreciation - Office Equipment		868	883
Total Depreciation		10,269	6,891
MOTOR VEHICLES			
Motor Vehicle Insurance		865	804
Fuel Expenses		2,935	3,489
Motor Vehicle Maintenance		1,052	1,442
Motor Vehicle Registration		686	643
Total Motor Vehicles		5,538	6,378
Advertising & Marketing		9,903	5,743
Bank Fees		1,232	408
Borrowing Expenses		469	469
Business Insurance		408	934
Computer Expenses		2,113	3,201
Conference Expenses		25,277	14,638
Engagement and Communiations		4,634	-
Fringe Benefits Tax		-	151
General Repairs & Maintenance		1,131	109
Interest Expense		-	1,838
Licences and Subscriptions		2,312	187
MDF Project Direct Expenses		-	1,060
Meeting Expense		939	1,201
Other Payroll Expenses	5	11,661	9,152
Postage		1,142	1,056
Premises Rent - Albury		-	706
Premises Rent - Echuca		15,500	15,000
Printing		1,150	1,519
Pro Indemnity Insurance		812	818
Professional Fees	6	250	11,073
Public Liability Insurance		654	659
Staff Amenities		141	126
Staff Training Expenses		1,541	500
Stationery		687	443
Superannuation		15,943	10,727
Telephone Expenses		4,977	4,823
Travel & Accom. Expenses		11,331	8,854
Uniforms		-	286
Wages & Salaries Expenses		171,770	116,983
Water Expenses		991	750
Work Cover Premiums		3,029	648
Total Expenditure		305,804	227,331
NET OPERATING PROFIT / (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR		(23,137)	20,453

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Notes	2018	2017
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash on Hand	7	74,966	118,304
Accounts Receivable and other Debtors	8	9,684	5,644
Other Current Assets	9	1,250	500
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		85,900	124,448
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Financial Assets	10	226,225	169,100
Property, plant and equipment	11	33,738	25,178
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		259,963	194,278
TOTAL ASSETS		345,863	318,726
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable and other payables	12	10,285	6,757
Borrowings	13	1,501	3,308
Provisions	14	16,138	13,855
Other	15	63,801	72,262
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		91,725	96,182
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Non-Current Liabilities			
Borrowings	13	1,500	3,895
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,500	3,895
TOTAL LIABILITIES		93,225	100,077
NET ASSETS		252,638	218,649
MEMBER'S FUNDS			
Capital Reserve			
Reserves		121,298	64,172
Retained Earnings		131,340	154,477
TOTAL MEMBER'S FUNDS		252,638	218,649

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Retained Earnings \$	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Total \$
BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2016	134,024	61,672	195,696
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	20,453	-	20,453
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	20,453	-	20,453
OTHER			
REVALUATIONS	-	2,500	2,500
TOTAL OTHER	-	2,500	2,500
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2017	154,477	64,172	218,649
BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2017	154,477	64,172	218,649
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	(23,137)	-	(23,137)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	(23,137)	-	(23,137)
OTHER			
REVALUATIONS	-	57,126	57,126
TOTAL OTHER		57,126	57,126
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2018	131,340	121,298	252,638

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Notes	2018	2017
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Other Receipts		281,231	312,221
Interest Received		1,436	685
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		(302,504)	(278,191)
Interest Paid		(469)	(1,838)
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Operating Activities	20b	(20,306)	32,877
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchases of Property, plant and equipment		(18,830)	2,823
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Investing Activities		(18,830)	2,823
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Borrowing Repayments		(4,202)	(6,998)
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) from Financing Activities		(4,202)	(6,998)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(43,338)	28,702
Cash on Hand at beginning of the Financial Year		118,304	89,602
Cash on Hand at End of Financial Year	20a	74,966	118,304

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010. The Board has determined that the not-for-profit Association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report covers Murray Darling Association Inc. as an individual entity. Murray Darling Association Inc. is a not-for-profit association incorporated in New South Wales under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010.

The financial report has been prepared on a going concern and accruals basis, and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is also the Association's functional currency.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

INCOME TAX

No provision for income tax has been raised as the Association is exempt from income tax pursuant to Division 50, section 50-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Fixed Assets are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all Fixed Assets is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the committee to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of expected net cash flows that will be received from the asset's employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to present values in determining recoverable amounts.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a diminishing-value basis over the asset's useful life to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period. An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE AND OTHER DEBTORS

Contractual receivables include accrued interest and other minor receivables. They are recognised at fair value.

NOTES CONTINUED

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the nominal amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus any related on-costs. Both annual leave and long service leave are recognised within the provisions liability.

Short-term employee benefits

Provision is made for the association's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages, salaries and sick leave. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled.

The association's obligations for short-term employee benefits such as wages, salaries and sick leave are recognised as a part of current trade and other payables in the statement of financial position.

Other long-term employee benefits

Provision is made for employees' long service leave and annual leave entitlements not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Other long-term employee benefits are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on government bonds that have maturity dates that approximate the terms of the obligations. Upon the re-measurement of obligations for other long-term employee benefits, the net change in the obligation is recognised in profit or loss as a part of employee benefits expense.

The association's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current provisions in its statement of financial position, except where the association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period, in which case the obligations are presented as current provisions.

PROVISIONS

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

CASH ON HAND

Cash includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

NOTES CONTINUED

REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME

Membership, Grants, Project, Activities & Interest revenue are recognised when received.

Donations and bequests are recognised in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1004 Contributions, which occurs when all of the following three conditions are satisfied: -

- (a) the entity gains control of the contribution or the right to receive the contribution; and
- (b) it is probable that the economic benefits comprising the contribution will flow to the entity; and
- (c) the amount of the contribution can be measured reliably.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

MURRAY DARLING FOUNDATION

The Murray Darling Foundation was established by the Murray Darling Association Inc. As a "Gift Fund" to receive tax deductible donations. The principal activity of the Foundation is to support the objectives of the Murray Darling Association Inc. The Foundation may receive gifts of money or property which are eligible tax deductible donations under item 6.1.1 of sub-section 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The Foundation is not currently operational. The Board resolved to suspend its activities pending a review of its purpose and the formation of a new committee.

LEASES

Leases of PPE, where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset (but not the legal ownership) are transferred to the association, are classified as finance leases.

Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for that period.

Leased assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of their estimated useful lives or the lease term. Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

FINANCIAL ASSETS

Investments in financial assets are initially recognised at cost, which includes transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value, which is equivalent to their market bid price at the end of the reporting period. Movements in fair value are recognised through an equity reserve

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND OTHER PAYABLES

Contractual payables arise when the association becomes obliged to make future payments in respect of the purchase of goods and services. They are initially recognised at fair value, and then subsequently carried at amortised cost.

NOTES CONTINUED

	2018	2017
2. MEMBERSHIPS		
Memberships	200,242	199,057
3. INTEREST INCOME		
Interest Received	1,436	685
4. OTHER INCOME		
Sundry Income	2,765	5,594
Water Sales	9,758	-
Expense Reimbursement	-	144
	12,523	5,738
5. EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS		
Annual Leave	4,161	9,152
Accrued Salaries	7,500	-
	11,661	9,152
6. PROFESSIONAL FEES		
Accounting Fees	-	1,950
Audit Fees	250	9,123
	250	11,073
7. CASH ON HAND		
Cash At Bank	74,966	118,304
	74,966	118,304
8. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE AND OTHER DEBTORS		
Trade Debtors	9,624	1,532
Goods and Services Tax	60	4,112
	9,684	5,644
9. OTHER CURRENT ASSETS		
Prepayments	1,250	500
10. FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Available for sale financial assets	(a) 226,225	169,100
	226,225	169,100
(a) Available for sale financial assets:		
Investments:		
High Security Water Shares	226,225	169,100

NOTES CONTINUED

	2018	2017
11. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Motor Vehicles	34,718	34,718
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(22,207)	(18,037)
	12,511	16,681
Office Furniture, Equipment and Computers	7,078	4,798
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(2,917)	(2,048)
	4,161	2,750
Low Value Pool	1,761	1,761
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(1,294)	(1,014)
	467	747
Software	16,550	-
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(4,951)	-
	11,599	-
Artwork	5,000	5,000
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	33,738	25,178
12. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade Creditors	6,535	845
Tax Payable	3,750	5,912
	10,285	6,757
13. BORROWINGS		
Current		
Hire Purchase Liability	1,696	3,998
Less Unexpired Hire Purchase Liability	(195)	(690)
	1,501	3,308
Non-Current		
Debenture Loans	1,500	1,500
Hire Purchase Liability	-	2,690
Less Unexpired Hire Purchase Liability	-	(295)
	1,500	3,895
	3,001	7,203

NOTES CONTINUED

	2018	2017
14. PROVISIONS		
Current		
Provision for Annual Leave	15,072	10,911
Provision for Long Service Leave	-	-
Superannuation Liability	1,066	2,944
	16,138	13,855
Provision for Annual Leave		
Opening Balance 1 July 2017	10,911	
Additional Provisions Raised	13,295	
Amounts Taken	(9,134)	
Balance at 30 June 2018	15,072	
Provision for Long Service Leave		
Opening Balance 1 July 2017	-	
Additional Provisions Raised	-	
Amounts Taken	-	
Balance at 30 June 2018	-	
Total Provisions		
Opening Balance 1 July 2017	10,911	4,198
Additional Provisions Raised	13,295	9,152
Amounts Taken	(9,134)	(2,439)
Superannuation Liability	1,066	2,944
Balance at 30 June 2018	16,138	13,855
15. OTHER LIABILITIES		
Accrued Charges	7,500	7,826
Income in Advance	56,301	64,436
	63,801	72,262

16. RESERVES

Asset Revaluation Reserve

The asset revaluation reserve records revaluations of non-current assets. Under certain circumstances dividends can be declared from this reserve.

17. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There are no commitments as at 30 June 2018 (2017: \$Nil)

18. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

There are no Contingent Liabilities at 30 June 2018 (2017: \$Nil).

There are no Contingent Assets at 30 June 2018 (2017: \$Nil).

NOTES CONTINUED

19. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

Since 30 June 2018, there have been no events that would materially affect the Financial Statements at Balance Date.

20. CASH FLOW INFORMATION

	2018	2017
Reconciliation of Cash		
(a) Cash on Hand at the end of the financial year as included in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:		
Cash	-	-
Cash at Bank	74,966	118,304
	74,966	118,304
(b) Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities with net current year profit		
Current year profit after income tax	(23,137)	20,454
Cash flows excluded from current year profit:		
Depreciation Expense	10,269	6,891
Impairment Loss / (Gain) on Fixed Assets	-	5,323
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) / Decrease in Receivables	(4,040)	657
(Increase) / Decrease in Prepayments	(750)	(500)
Increase / (Decrease) in Payables	(4,931)	(4,666)
Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions	2,283	4,718
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	(20,306)	32,877

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

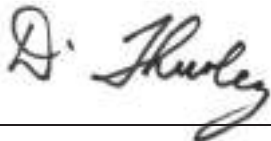
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In accordance with a resolution of the committee of Murray Darling Association Inc. the members of the committee declare that the financial statements as set out on pages 15 to 26:

- 1 present a true and fair view of the financial position of Murray Darling Association Inc. as at 30 June 2018 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010; and
- 2 at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Murray Darling Association Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:



David Thurley - National President



Peter George - Treasurer

Dated: 18th July 2018

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc, which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2018, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Murray Darling Association Inc as of 30 June 2018, and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009.

Basis of Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee of the Murray Darling Association Inc are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, committees are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Warren Pollock
MGR ACCOUNTANTS
mgr@mgr.com.au

6 August 2018

SECTION 7: OUR HISTORY

A HISTORY OF PERFORMANCE

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr Graham Camac	Meningie SA
Mr Max Moor	Barmah NSW
Ms Pauline Frost	Adelaide SA
Mr Phillip Moore	Melbourne Vic
Mr Don Oberin	Echuca Vic
Mr Les Hill	Berri SA
Mr Brian J Grogan	OAM Mildura Vic
Mr Ken Rogers	Dubbo City NSW
Dr Terry Hillman AM	Lavington NSW
Mr Phillip Potter	Narooma NSW
Mr Jim Hullick OAM	Adelaide SA
Mr Wulf Reichler	Brewarrina NSW
Mr Jack James Larkin OAM	Spring Gully Qld
Mr J Bede Mecham	Wagga Wagga NSW
Mr Kevin Pell OAM	Nathalia Vic
Mr Bill Gorman	Mulwala NSW

PRESIDENTS

DG Padman	Albury City Council	1944-5
JG Strangman	District Council of Waikerie	1952-56
Henry Lester Smith OBE	Gannawarra Shire Council	1956-60
E Verco Whyte	Wentworth Shire Council	1960-65
Robert S Rankin OBE	Shire of Campaspe	1965-68
Tom E Pearsall	Albury City Council	1968-71
Paul Gerard Schmidt	District Council of Mannum	1971-74
Jim W Gemmell	Moira Shire Council	1974-77
Jack J Larkin OAM	Swan Hill Shire	1977-82
Don K Oberin	Shire of Campaspe	1982-86
Jim M Hullick OAM	Adelaide City Council	1986-89
Graham C Camac	Coorong District Council	1989-92
Max Moor	Moira Shire Council	1992-98
Ray Trestrail	Albury City Council	1998-2000
Brian Sharp OAM	Shire of Murray	2000-03
Brian J Grogan OAM	Mildura Rural Council	2003-06
Bill Gorman	Corowa Shire Council	2006-09
Ken Rogers	Dubbo City Council	2009-13
Cr Greg Toll	Shire of Campaspe	2013-15
Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	2015-

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

1	1945	Albury NSW	26	1970	Mildura Vic	51	1995	Broken Hill NSW
2	1946	Shepparton Vic	27	1971	Kerang Vic	52	1996	Barmera SA
3	1947	Murray Bridge SA	28	1972	Murray Bridge SA	53	1997	Swan Hill Vic
4	1948	Swan Hill Vic	29	1973	Echuca Vic	54	1998	Strathalbyn SA
5	1949	Wentworth NSW	30	1974	Corowa NSW	55	1999	Moama NSW
6	1950	Berri SA	31	1975	Loxton SA	56	2000	Brewarrina NSW
7	1951	Corowa NSW	32	1976	Wodonga Vic	57	2001	Buronga NSW
8	1952	Victor Harbor	33	1977	Camberwell Vic	58	2002	Whyalla SA
9	1953	Albury NSW	34	1978	Swan Hill Vic	59	2003	Corowa NSW
10	1954	Mildura Vic	35	1979	Berri SA	60	2004	Renmark SA
11	1955	Kerang Vic	36	1980	Deniliquin NSW	61	2005	Dubbo NSW
12	1956	Melbourne Vic	37	1981	Wentworth NSW	62	2006	Barham NSW
13	1957	Barmera SA	38	1982	Murray Bridge SA	63	2007	Bourke NSW
14	1958	Deniliquin NSW	39	1983	Echuca Vic	64	2008	Leeton NSW
15	1959	Mt Beauty Vic	40	1984	Adelaide SA	65	2009	Elizabeth SA
16	1960	Renmark SA	41	1985	Jerilderie	66	2010	Beechworth Vic
17	1961	Swan Hill Vic	42	1986	Mildura Vic	67	2011	Dalby Qld
18	1962	Albury NSW	43	1987	Albury NSW	68	2012	Mildura Vic
19	1963	Victor Harbor SA	44	1988	Renmark SA	69	2013	Goolwa SA
20	1964	Mildura Vic	45	1989	Barham NSW	70	2014	Tumut NSW
21	1965	Yarrawonga Vic	46	1990	Murray Bridge SA	71	2015	Berrigan NSW
22	1966	Adelaide SA	47	1991	Cobram Vic	72	2016	Dubbo NSW
23	1967	Shepparton Vic	48	1992	Whyalla SA	73	2017	Renmark SA
24	1968	Deniliquin NSW	49	1993	Wentworth NSW	74	2018	Leeton NSW
25	1969	Waikerie SA	50	1994	Yarrawonga Vic			

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE

In 2016 the MDA adopted its new constitution, following an extensive two-year review of the existing document and consultation with the membership and stakeholders.

The aim of the review was not to change substantially the purpose or objectives of the organisation, but rather, to update the document, and remove uncertainty regarding governance arrangements and voting rights.

The association has grown from its foundation membership of some 14 councils spanning just two states, to now encompass the entire Murray Darling Basin.

Since being adopted, the 2016 Constitution has seen powerful change, enabling the MDA to operate with a contemporary governance structure, clear voting rights, providing the framework for members and the executive to focus on current issues and a strong future.



Founding constitution of the Murray Valley Development League adopted at the Yarrowonga Conference 1944. A vision for the future as relevant today as then.

Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC) meet in St George (R12) in February 2018.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VALE

John James Jack Larkin
28 September 1924 – 29 March 2018



One of the Murray Darling Association's great stalwarts and elder statesmen, the former Swan Hill Council representative to Region 3 was made a life member of the then Murray Valley Development League in 1982.

National President 1977-82, Mr Larkin was a former Vice-President of the MVDL and past Region 3 Chairman.

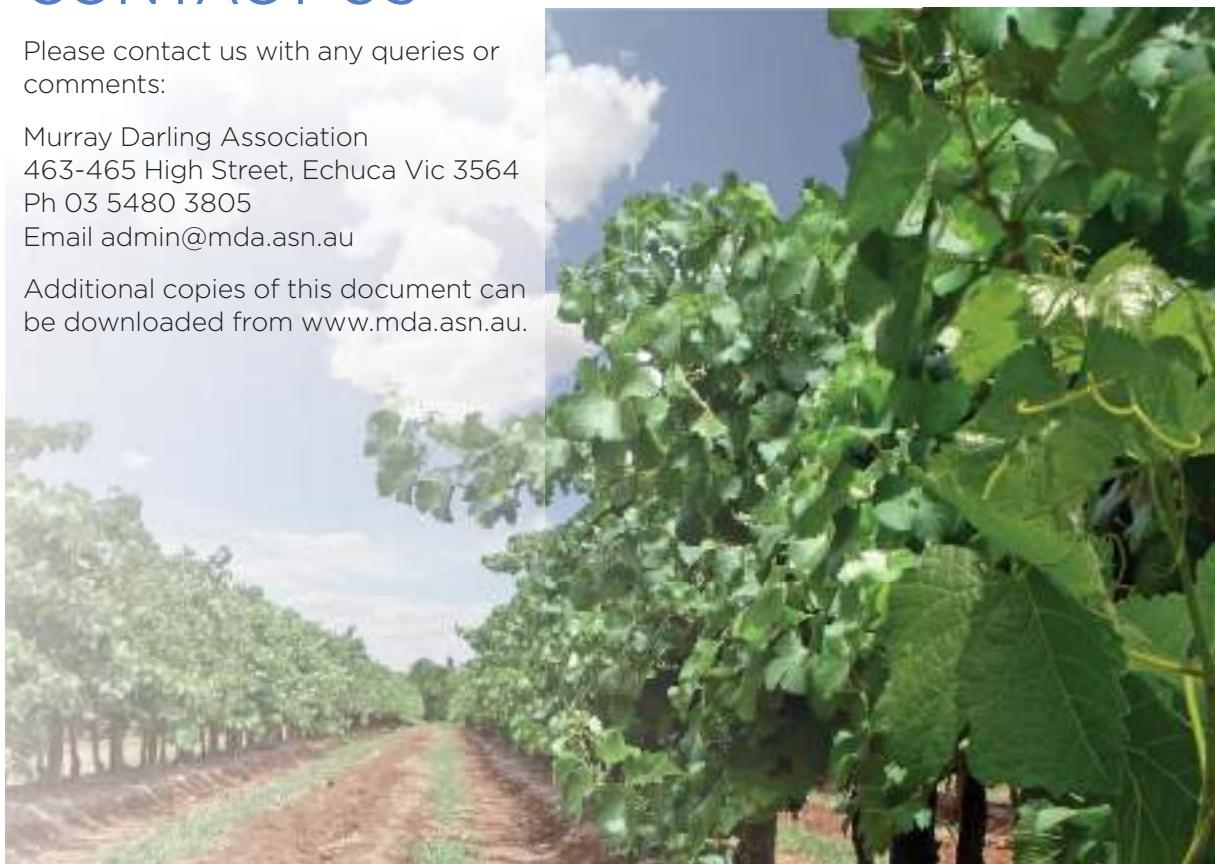
Murray Darling Association Senior Officer, Angus Verley delivered a tribute on behalf of the MDA at Jack's memorial service, sharing the fond recollections of several former staffers and members.

CONTACT US

Please contact us with any queries or comments:

Murray Darling Association
463-465 High Street, Echuca Vic 3564
Ph 03 5480 3805
Email admin@mda.asn.au

Additional copies of this document can be downloaded from www.mda.asn.au.







Ms Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer
Murray Darling Association Inc.
463 High Street, Echuca VIC 3564

Dear Emma,

Responses to questions 2017 Murray Darling Association's Annual General Meeting

Please see the department's responses to the two outstanding questions from the MDA's 2017 AGM.

6.8 Management of the Menindee Lakes (Region 4)

Motion: That the Murray Darling Association call on the NSW Government to make available a detailed brief on the Menindee Lakes System Sustainable Diversion Limit Project such details to include but not limited to:

- The storage capacity and evaporation losses of the Menindee Lakes;
- The methodology for calculating, monitoring and reporting on the storage capacity and evaporation losses of the Menindee Lakes;
- How do these volumes contribute to the Sustainable Diversion Limit;
- How will the SDL Adjustment Mechanism project for Menindee Lakes work;
- The Menindee Lakes Water Saving Plan.

a) Storage capacity of the Lakes system is set out below:

Lake	Full Supply level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Maximum Surcharge Level (m AHD)	Maximum Surcharge Volume (GL)	Dead Storage (m AHD)	Dead Storage Volume (GL)
Wetherell	61.67	193.0	62.30	262.2	52.50	0.5
Pamamaroo	60.45	277.7	61.50	353.0	56.00	10.9
Menindee	59.84	629.5	60.45	729.0	55.90	60.0
Cawndilla	59.84	631.0	60.45	705.0	54.00	48.0
TOTAL		1,731.2		2,049.2		119.4
Copi Hollow only	61.50	12.2			58.30	2.7
Lake Tandure only	61.67	77.4			57.80	9.4

It should be noted that the nominal full supply levels and maximum surcharge levels presented in this table are lower than the original design capacity of 2,400 GL. These lower levels have been adopted operationally to minimise risks to a number of structures. Reduced surcharge levels and lower operating levels also minimise lake foreshore erosion, particularly erosion of the sensitive lunettes, and subsequent impacts on the indigenous archaeology contained in the sediments surrounding the Lakes

b) Calculation of evaporation losses are based on Bureau of Meteorology data and modelled by the MDBA who have estimated that the Menindee Water Savings project will deliver evaporative and transmission loss savings on an average long term basis of 106 GL/year.

c) The Menindee Water Savings project is one of the 36 SDL projects modelled by the MDBA as enabling the total 605 GL reduction in the SDL gap the southern connected basin.

The MDBA modelling of the SDL package of 36 SDL projects considered the interaction across project and assessed interact with one another and produce an overall equivalent or improved environmental outcome. It was not designed to quantify the volume of adjustment attributable to individual projects water savings collectively, so the impact of any one project cannot be considered in isolation from all of the others. MDBA has however provided advice that the Menindee project was a critical project in its recommended 605 GL of adjustment.

d) The Menindee project is fundamentally about new infrastructure and operating rules which enable water evaporation and delivery losses to be recognised and used for environmental purposes. The changes are focussed on:

- Allowing the operation of Lake Menindee independently of Lake Cawndilla, and managing Lake Cawndilla for environmental outcomes, rather than water regulation
- enlarging the outlet structure and constructing a drainage channel in the bed of Lake Menindee,
- increasing flexibility of supply by preferentially retaining water in the more efficient Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo,
- accommodating higher managed flows in the Lower Darling through works to:
 - limit breakouts onto the floodplain and into dry lakes and anabranches
 - protect private infrastructure from being impacted by higher flows, including changed operational rules to complement structural works.

The construction of the Broken Hill town water supply pipeline and the Commonwealth purchase of Tandou High Security water licences has enabled much greater evaporative savings than would have otherwise been possible if water for these licences needed to be stored in the Lakes.

Further documentation on the project is being finalised.

6.9 Moratorium on the Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline (Region 4)

Motion: That the Murray Darling Association calls on the NSW Government to Place an immediate moratorium on the construction of the Wentworth to Broken Hill water pipeline

The Broken Hill Pipeline represents a record investment in regional water security, and the decision to construct it was undertaken with the specific aim of providing water security for the Broken Hill, Menindee, Sunset Strip, and Silverton communities. Historical data dating back to the 1800s shows that the Menindee Lakes frequently suffer from severe water shortages, while the recent frequency and severity of droughts has increased to a level comparable to the early 1900s placing communities in an emergency water supply situation.

While emergency supply measures were undertaken during 2014-15, including the construction of the reverse osmosis plant, brine ponds, and construction of shallow bores at Lake Menindee these measures will not provide adequate water for a protracted period of drought. By contrast, the construction of the Broken Hill Pipeline will ensure that Broken Hill is no longer solely reliant on the notoriously variable flows in the Darling River, and will have a reliable supply of water for the first time. Further, improved water quality from the water

piped from the Murray River is expected to provide better health outcomes for the people of Broken Hill, while the increased availability of water is expected to benefit the surrounding communities

The NSW Government considered 19 potential options to provide water security for the region, some of which were identified by the community. Other options included sourcing water from deep aquifers, changing existing surface water arrangements, alternate pipeline routes, and taking no action. Each of these options was subjected to extensive economic, social, environmental, and technical analysis, to ensure that only feasible options were progressed.

Make public the business case for the Wentworth to Broken Hill Water Pipeline.

The NSW Government has released a summary of the business case which presents critical elements of the Broken Hill Long-Term Water Supply Solution Final Business Case dated 31 March 2016 (the Final Business Case) and analysis of the full range of options. Together these underpinned NSW Government's decision to invest in a long-term transformational project to secure water supply for Broken Hill in the Far West of the State (the Initiative).

The final business case was developed for the express purpose of government deliberation and decision and not for broader public release. The summary of the business case is available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries' website www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/water-availability/brokenhill

Yours sincerely



Andrew Garratt
Manager Water Relationships
19 06.2018



Wednesday, 5 September 2018

The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Littleproud

At the 74th annual general meeting of the Murray Darling Association held in Leeton on 31st August 2018, a record number of voting delegates representing councils and local government across all four Basin states voted in favour of a motion calling on the MDA to *lobby the Federal and Shadow Minister to instigate a National Water Registry*.

I have attached here a copy of the relevant item 5.9 for your reference. A full copy of the minutes is available on the MDA website.

The MDA would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to identify next steps in seeking to pursue this important initiative.

Could you please advise if you, or a representative from your department are available to meet with Mayor Melisa Hederics as Chair of region 4 and myself in relation to this matter.

Please feel free to contact me on 0429 905 017 or email e.bradbury@mda.asn.au if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

Cc:

The Hon David Littleproud Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
The Hon Tony Burke MP Shadow Minister for Environment and Water

Objective:

To have a comprehensive database of all water related information for the entire country, easy to use and capable of compiling reports regarding water movement and use across the nation, including foreign ownership information tracking and reporting, in the interests of security of future water supply for communities and industry and being able to plan for future events such as extended dry periods. Downstream impacts of illegal take and government policy need to be addressed. A better understanding of water availability and demand across Australia as our population continues to grow and more rapid identification of illegal take or impacts on long term sustainable future can inform planning and policy.

Key Arguments:

While previous versions and elements of Water Registry have come and gone, the technology now exists which enables live data tracking and GPS monitoring of water flow and movement across land. There also is greater capability to combine multiple state databases into a one stop shop, which is easy to use and can adhere to standards, privacy and ensure secure data.

Perhaps the biggest single issue facing water management in this country is lack of transparency and public perception of mismanagement. Sourcing multiple websites from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Commonwealth Environmental Water Office, Bureau of Meteorology, various state water authorities and agencies and Regulatory offices can be a tiresome exercise.

Indeed, various macro data is available across NSW which is patently incorrect or the “missing” data referred to in NSW Land and Water Commissioner dataset.

Ken Matthews’ report called for verifiable accurate data, the recently signed Compliance Compact highlights metering and a raft of goals and targets, prioritising risk areas, which suggests there is an appetite across the board for access to trustworthy data.

For companies wishing to maximise their investments, the best way to determine whether the price they want to pay for land and water meets their needs is to have access to all the variables and some historical data to inform possible investment or growth. Indeed, how much water is available is perhaps the biggest determination of investment decisions at the present time.

As well as a commercial function, foreign investors and the Australian public and regulators need to ensure that investment is in line with current legislation pertaining to percentage of foreign ownership. By providing accurate, current information and transparency, there can be greater certainty in the international and domestic market and in the wider public arena, that investment is supportive of Australian industry as a priority

Moved: Cr J MacAllister/Cr J Modica

That the Murray Darling Association lobby the Federal and Shadow Minister to instigate a National Water Registry, to monitor and report on all rainfall, surface and groundwater storage, evaporation and capacity or movement, including flow rate and interstate or intervalley trade, extraction, unaccounted activity, licenses and allocation in real time, and inform the public in relation to foreign ownership of water assets and infrastructure.

Carried



Wednesday, 5 September 2018

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Shadow Minister for Environment and Water
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Burke

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Yours sincerely,

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

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For companies wishing to maximise their investments, the best way to determine whether the price they want to pay for land and water meets their needs is to have access to all the variables and some historical data to inform possible investment or growth. Indeed, how much water is available is perhaps the biggest determination of investment decisions at the present time.

As well as a commercial function, foreign investors and the Australian public and regulators need to ensure that investment is in line with current legislation pertaining to percentage of foreign ownership. By providing accurate, current information and transparency, there can be greater certainty in the international and domestic market and in the wider public arena, that investment is supportive of Australian industry as a priority

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Carried



Wednesday, 5 September 2018

The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Littleproud

At the 74th annual general meeting of the Murray Darling Association held in Leeton on 31st August 2018, a record number of voting delegates representing councils and local government across all four Basin states voted in favour of a motion calling on *the Federal Government to create a National Water Ombudsman*.

I have attached here a copy of the relevant item 5.10 for your reference. A full copy of the minutes is available on the MDA website.

The MDA would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to identify next steps in seeking to pursue this important initiative.

Could you please advise if you, or a representative from your department are available to meet with Mayor Melisa Hederics as Chair of region 4 and myself in relation to this matter.

Please feel free to contact me on 0429 905 017 or email e.bradbury@mda.asn.au if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

Objective:

Sustainable water resource management, water security, and water quality is a key issue for communities across Australia, particularly in a changing climate.

Key Arguments:

Under the Constitution of Australia, water is an area for the states to legislate, unless they confer their power to the Commonwealth, as occurred to establish the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). Since its inception, we have seen the level of agreement between the states which is required to effect change and the occasional threat of some states to revoke their conferred power – to leave the MDBA Agreement.

Climate change adaptation is a challenge faced by local government across Australia. Key to long term sustainable future for communities across Australia is strong policy in water resource management to ensure equitable and transparent allocation and use of our limited water resources.

Recent media investigations have demonstrated that there are potential issues in regard to water management across states and the creation of a National Water Ombudsman would assist in re-establishing confidence among communities and local government, that the Federal Government is committed to ensuring the long-term future of communities throughout regional Australia through transparent and open processes.

By providing oversight through the judiciary, including provisions around preventing the concealment of information (eg NSW Ombudsman reports) and ensuring such office is compelled to publish findings, the public can be assured that legislation is uniform across state borders and adheres to extant laws at all levels around water sharing, trade and use, as the perception of vested interests, which can permeate the political system and erode confidence, will be finally eliminated from the equation.

While states will retain the legislative function in relation to water, proposed legislation will have the benefit of legal opinion at the highest level, with national oversight and vision to provide big picture response and risk management across state borders. The MDBA has been conferred towards a specific purpose – being the Murray Darling Basin and roll out of the Water Act 2007 - Basin Plan 2012 (the Plan), but an Ombudsman with Federal jurisdiction will be able to arbitrate and adjudicate on any water dispute across the country.

By giving this Ombudsman the power to impose punitive measures, enforcement and punishment can be standardised and will better reflect water and its misuse as a national value and matter for redress, in line with and informed by the various legislation and case law history in this country.

Moved: Cr J MacAllister/Cr J Modica

That the Murray Darling Association calls on the Federal Government to create a National Water Ombudsman with Federal jurisdiction to inquire, arbitrate, enforce, impose punitive measures and oversee amendments to state water legislation.

Carried



Wednesday, 5 September 2018

The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Littleproud

At the 74th annual general meeting of the Murray Darling Association held in Leeton on 31st August 2018, a record number of voting delegates representing councils and local government across all four Basin states voted in favour of a motion calling on *the Federal Government to strengthen the role of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority with regard to enforcement of compliance to guarantee that agreed flows are allowed to pass downstream for the length of the Barwon/Darling River.*

I have attached here a copy of the relevant item 5.12 for your reference. A full copy of the minutes is available on the MDA website.

The MDA would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to identify next steps in seeking to pursue this important initiative.

Could you please advise if you, or a representative from your department are available to meet with Mayor Melisa Hederics as Chair of region 4 and myself in relation to this matter.

Please feel free to contact me on 0429 905 017 or email e.bradbury@mda.asn.au if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

Key Arguments:

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) covers multiple states including Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

The Murray-Darling Basin is one of the world's largest and most productive river basins, accounting for \$19 billion of agricultural output and providing one third of Australia's food supply. It harbours some of our most important natural assets, supporting a diverse array of animals, plants and ecosystems of national and international significance.

The system of rivers, lakes and wetlands that run through our nation (the Murray Darling Basin) is complex, diverse and dynamic. There is nothing simple about it. For those managing water it's a challenge they navigate through every day.

Currently the MDBA operates across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. The aim of the Basin Plan is to ensure that water is shared between all users, including the environment, in a sustainable way. However, these arrangements are administered by member States and there is a lack of consistency across those States in terms of each State's arrangements and enforcement.

In July 2017 the ABC *Four Corners* program "Pumped" revealed astounding malpractice and alleged corruption, which is currently being investigated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Some of these allegedly corrupt transactions hide behind an alleged veil of incompetence of some states. Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on water "buybacks", where the government has paid twice the going rate for water which effectively does not exist, except during heavy rainfall and peak water conditions.

Four Corners also highlighted the problems with pumping and metering arrangements in NSW and the issues of alleged water theft and pumping at times of low river flow.

There are also issues in Queensland and a lack of agreement between Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales about water allocation and efficiencies.

In this context it would be advantageous for the MDBA to exercise the authority for compliance and enforcement of agreed outcomes for the basin regarding water retention and extraction limits to guarantee that agreed flows can pass downstream for the length of the river system.

Moved: Cr J MacAllister/G José

That the Murray Darling Association calls upon the Federal Government to strengthen the role of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority with regard to enforcement of compliance regarding water retention and extraction limits to guarantee that agreed flows are allowed to pass downstream for the length of the Barwon/Darling River.

Carried

Lower Darling Options Analysis

Stakeholder Brief

Dates: 14th and 15th of August 2018

Scope of the Lower Darling Options Analysis Project

The Department of Industry – Water has identified the need for a strategic analysis of the feasibility of a range of options to address water security issues in the Lower Darling catchment. This analysis will identify options which warrant further analysis and options which should be excluded from further investigation.

Multiple factors contribute to long-term water security concerns in the Lower Darling. One is the proposed reconfiguration of the Menindee Lakes as part of the Menindee Lakes Water Savings Project (the Project) put forward by the NSW Government as a supply measure proposal under the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

The Project is a package of proposed operational changes and infrastructure works that together will deliver water efficiency savings, better river operations, and improved environmental outcomes.

Early consultation with stakeholders and the community has raised a number of concerns which need to be addressed as part of the Project to better understand potential impacts on the Lower Darling.

Deloitte Advisory – independent analysis

The Department has engaged Deloitte to conduct an independent analysis of the costs, benefits and feasibility of a range of options to address water supply changes in the Lower Darling catchment resulting from the Menindee Lakes Water Savings Project.

This analysis, which will include hydrologic modelling, will identify which of the options warrant further analysis and which option(s) should be excluded from further investigation.

The level of existing analysis to date on each of these options varies, and the Department understands that challenges exist with all options.

The options will need to be considered against the overall objectives of capacity and reliability of water supply, including quality; affordability; and efficiency.

Deloitte's analysis will determine the feasibility of the identified options, with an intention of identifying option(s) which warrant further investigation.

It is envisaged that the shortlist of options identified through this project would proceed to a detailed business case process.

Scope of the Lower Darling Water Supply Report

Deloitte is in the early stages of its engagement with the Department of Industry - Water. At this stage, Deloitte's scope includes:

- Identifying which of the options warrant further analysis and which option(s) should be excluded from further investigation
- Assess the benefits and the feasibility based on engineering requirements
- Assess hydrological risks using available models
- Initial cost analysis of the options
- Identification of any major issues which may impact on deliverability or the ability to obtain necessary approvals under the *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979* or other key legislation

Deloitte's report will be delivered to the Department in September 2018.

Purpose of this meeting

The purpose of this meeting relates to seeking input on a number of long term water supply options for Lower Darling users, including:

- Introduce an initial six water supply options for Lower Darling water users
- Identify any additional options or alterations to existing options that should be considered in the report
- Understand stakeholder views on the scope, risks or opportunities of each of the options being analysed.

Current list of options

The following is the initial list of six options that have been identified for consideration:

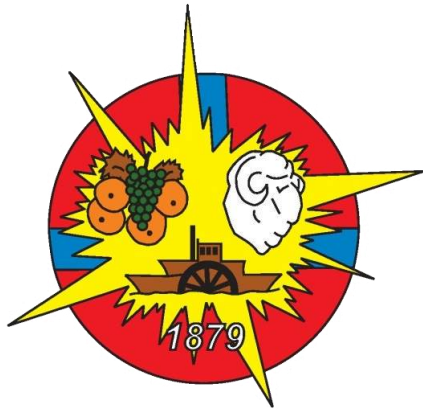
1. Structural adjustment package for the buy-back of water entitlements adversely impacted by the Menindee Lakes Water Savings Project. This option would be supplemented by one of the following infrastructure solutions:
 - a) Pipelines to Pooncarie, down from Weir 32 and up from the Murray River, to maintain stock and domestic water supply
 - b) A pipeline from the Murray River up to Weir 32 to maintain stock and domestic water supply
2. Infrastructure works to create more on-farm storage
3. Infrastructure works for in-stream regulators, which includes the following two sub-options:
 - a) Four in-stream weirs along the Darling River at Ashvale, Jamesville, Ringwood and downstream of the Great Darling Anabranch
 - b) The four in-stream weirs proposed in 3(a), above, and 13 Tallywalka boreholes
4. Pipeline to connect Pooncarie to the Wentworth to Broken Hill (W2BH) Pipeline
5. Pipeline infrastructure work to service all entitlements and users, which includes the following two sub-options:
 - a) Pipelines to Pooncarie down from Weir 32 and up from the Murray River to supply all entitlements and users
 - b) Pipeline from the Murray River up to Weir 32 to supply all entitlements and users.
6. Re-scoping the Menindee Lakes Water Savings Project to maintain a drought reserve, maintaining the Lower Darling's long term reliance on the Menindee Lakes system, which would likely have flow-on impacts to the water savings that could be achieved.

Key questions for stakeholders attending consultation

1. Please confirm the stakeholders that you represent.
2. Have you previously been involved in developing options or discussed the presented options to supply Lower Darling water users an alternate solution?
3. Are you familiar with the Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project and the preliminary Business Case that was publicly released?
4. Can you confirm the water entitlements you hold and identify your access location on the map?
5. Are there any additional options, or alterations to existing options, that you believe should be considered within this report?
6. What are key considerations for each of the proposed options?
 - a. How would the proposed option impact your stakeholder group?
 - b. What are the risks or opportunities of the options?

Other opportunities for input

The Department will provide further opportunities for input and feedback following this initial consultation period, including follow up phone calls, email correspondence and ongoing consultations from Department of Industry – Water representatives.



Wentworth Shire Council

Submission

Department of Industry & Deloitte

Response to Stakeholder Brief

Lower Darling Options Analysis

August 2018

**Department of Industry & Deloitte response to Stakeholder Brief Lower Darling Options Analysis August 2018
Submission of Wentworth Shire Council**

The 2016 ABS census data reveals a population across Wentworth Shire of 6,955, Wentworth Shire Councillors represent not only the population of Wentworth Shire, but are keenly aware that Central Darling Shire (2017 population 1,833), which border connects to the north, has been under administration for some years and is not due for review until 2020. Councillors have agreed that it falls to Wentworth Shire to take on a representative role for Central Darling Shire and speak to issues and consult and advocate on its behalf, as well as Wentworth Shire.

In combination with Mildura Rural City Council, directly across the river from Wentworth Shire's fastest growth townships of Buronga and Gol Gol (and just 30kms from the town of Wentworth) the regional population is actually more like 65,000. Decisions relating to Menindee Lakes and the lower Darling also directly impact Mildura district socio-economically.

Wentworth Shire is 2,625,625 hectares¹ located at the south-west corner of NSW, on the confluence of the Darling and Murray rivers. The closest capital city is Adelaide, SA, at just under 400kms. Melbourne is 570kms and Sydney is more than 1,000kms away.

Once considered as the place for the national capital, Wentworth's history saw it become one of the major inland ports, transporting produce (mainly wool, wheat and trees) along the two major river systems into three states via the major successful paddlesteamer industry of inland Australia.

The knowledge of the rivers, their importance to prosperity, growth and survival in our region is very strong. Many of the 70 or so farming families living along the lower Darling are fifth generation farmers and there have been many other locals involved in managing Menindee Lakes over time, who have a wealth of understanding and practical experience in managing the land and the vital water source.

More than 16,425,000 sunrises witnessed over Mungo

Discovery of human skeletal remains ceremoniously treated on the shores of the now dry Lake Mungo, have revealed scientific evidence of advanced civilization as far back as 45,000 years. The entirety of Wentworth Shire is the subject of Native Title Determination #8 and many locals can trace their ancestry and custodial connection to the region, most especially along the Darling and Murray rivers.

The Barkandji Native title holders are tied to the river they call "Barka". The junction of the ancient and modern Barka is at Menindee, there are middens which date back to 23,000 years at Menindee. Traditional

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Land Area (Ha)

**Department of Industry & Deloitte response to Stakeholder Brief Lower Darling Options Analysis August 2018
Submission of Wentworth Shire Council**

owners, Maraura peoples, have living memory of caretaking the lands from the Darling river west, across the South Australian border, and being rounded up to live at the Aboriginal mission at Pooncarie.

The Barkandji want the Menindee Lakes to be listed as significant wetlands area, they say the river should flow free and want to help manage the river and lakes systems, as they have for many thousands of years. The Barkandji consider there are no positive outcomes across the 6 options and are concerned that all will result in a loss of cultural value, social wellbeing and economic opportunity.

Recommendation: Local traditional owners and custodians of the land should play a greater role in land and water management, for the benefit of all

What's missing

The six options presented for consideration remove the opportunity to tap into vast amounts of knowledge and experience from locals for whom the lower Darling and Menindee Lakes are lifebloods. They also fail to take into account the root cause of the problems.

One connected system

The common consideration locals know with great certainty and which continues to be overlooked by policy makers at both State and Federal level is that the river system and catchments are one whole network of linked ecosystems and must be treated as a whole system – the propensity to separate the northern basin from the southern has meant that reviews at the northern end have failed to take into account outcomes downstream, a direct result of the management and extraction practices upstream.

This lack of connected basin, wholistic approach is the key to the issues currently under the microscope and the past few years of cease to flow events and diminishing quality of life experience of residents affected in the Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling area.

Recommendation: Wentworth Shire community suggests there needs to be minimum flow targets along the whole length of the Darling river.

As well as the main urban centres of Wentworth, Dareton / Coomealla, Buronga and Gol Gol, there are also small towns along the lower Darling including Pomona, Ellerslie and Pooncarie, which has a weir with an interesting history that has left a frustrating legacy for both the town and the Council.

Pooncarie weir failure

The Pooncarie weir rectifications undertaken in 2013 resulted in the current weir being positioned some metres away from its original position, the outcome of which produces depleted reservoir during higher than

**Department of Industry & Deloitte response to Stakeholder Brief Lower Darling Options Analysis August 2018
Submission of Wentworth Shire Council**

present flows – less height, less capacity reserve. The frustrating part for Council is that the new weir has somehow become a Council “asset”, although it could be argued the liability and failure has been shifted from Government onto Council with no foresight into what problems this legacy has created.

Locals know of extensive weir systems planned throughout history indeed, some ancient remains of primitive weirs are still to be found and all note the weir at Menindee is number 32 of the series. There are historical navigation maps which support the early weir networks existence and many of the older folk can relate solutions to successfully run the river by maintaining flow by way of weir positioning and use of gravity created by using the natural undulations of the geography.

During the most recent cease to flow event, Wentworth Shire Council trucked potable water into Pooncarie and landholders along the Darling, who were without water supply for nine months.

Despite receiving no assurances from the NSW Government that it will assist with costs of trucking potable once again to drought-affected households along the lower Darling, Wentworth Shire Council have again decided the urgency for many impacted families far outweighs any other factors and has again begun this arduous, necessary measure to ensure the health and safety of its ratepayers.

Recommendation: Replace the Pooncarie Weir to its original position, which will then provide greater water security and longer weir pool to service the township and surrounds.

Policy and Pumped – where is our water?

For many years now, our ratepayers have understood and tried to get the message across that the depleted Darling river is due mainly to poor management practices, both by Government policy and delivery and upstream disregard for rules, perhaps even illegal pumping activity, for which we know charges have now been laid.

We understand that no inflows means there will be no water savings and that weirs only work if there is enough water to fill them.

Having extensive history of flood and drought impacts, many different solutions and policies imposed, often without consultation, the management of the Menindee Lakes System has been of particular relevance to those farmers above the Murray river weir pool (about 80km by river from the confluence), but also impacts Murray Weir pool licences – especially in terms of water quality.

Locals have reported issues after removal of block banks in water quality and stressed the need for proper flushing of that water held for months, stagnating behind block banks. In particular, the appearance of an

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Submission of Wentworth Shire Council**

unidentified type of “scale” which needs to be scrubbed from pump filters is of concern. Reports of effects on crops being experienced at these times are also concerning.

Recommendation: That Menindee Lakes Reserve is not decreased as proposed, but increased to 800GL and calculated without the inclusion of inaccessible or “dead” storage, including Lake Cawndilla.

Water scarcity = degradation = health issues

There is no testing of water quality other than salinity and considering the amount of on-farm storage and processing use of some of the larger agricultural industries in the northern basin, it is suggested more is done to ensure the quality of water released back into the river and catchment areas. Of particular concern are the combination of pesticides, herbicides and chemicals added during processing, along with glyphosates which we know are not tested for safety in combination and have no way of knowing how or which chemicals become transformed into dangerous toxic poisons or contribute to algal blooms and certain bacteria when combined.

The health of our ratepayers is of paramount concern to Wentworth Shire Council – particularly the more vulnerable children and elderly members of our communities.

Reduced or non-existent flows limit access to reliable water for stock and domestic use and the river also acts as a boundary for many properties along the lower Darling. Stock and predatory or feral animals can access the usual waterways to extend their feeding grounds, causing several other issues for farmers as their stock go missing or fall victim to boggy ponds or foxes and numerous other jobs must be addressed – finding missing herds or individuals and removing bogged or half-eaten carcasses from the waterways. Decomposing fish, birds and animals and fecal matter can further reduce water quality in reduced flows and add to the possible mix of blue-green algae and bacteria created in the mire.

Flows of even small quantity must be maintained to ensure sufficient flushing of the river system and to keep the moisture content of the soils and maintain groundwater reserves.

There needs to be better flushing, as after the last block banks were removed, salinity was 3,000 EC units. Unidentified scale and disease has required scraping off pumps in the weir pool, which has never seen before. There is a need to keep the water moving.

Poor quality water, the result of inappropriate or insufficient flows along the river has been responsible for serious medical conditions, including severe skin infections resembling scalds and a recent diagnosis of bacterial meningitis – a disease prevalent in third world countries.

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To make matters worse, the storage of poor quality water (being the only available source for a protracted period of time) has contaminated all storage equipment, meaning that fresh water purchased was inadvertently stored and used without a full understanding of the risks.

The consequence of having washed water tanks and equipment, but not completely eliminating the bacteria causing the skin disorders was recontamination and repeat infection, ultimately creating a resistance to antibiotics, which in children has now the potential to impact the success of treatment for any infection for the rest of their lives.

Recommendation: Flows need to be maintained to ensure water quality and healthy groundwater for bores in times of drought and to keep the ecosystem alive.

Without our chief economies, what future for Wentworth Shire?

Wentworth Shire Council is concerned that by removing two of our primary economies, agriculture and fishing, the future of our region becomes greatly depressed, to the detriment of all who live in the Murray Darling Basin and are involved in those two economies domestically and internationally.

The 2016 ABS census data reveals a population across Wentworth Shire of 6,955, the main industries, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing employ 20% of the population².

Linked economies like tourism, which has much latent potential in our region, which Council is keen to unlock, will likewise suffer – most particularly that of recreational fishing tourism, a substantial economic driver locally on both sides of the state border.

Basin-wide, it is estimated that recreational fishing is worth \$1.3 Billion per year, while linked fishing tourism, approximately \$6.7 Billion per year. Why should Wentworth miss out on a slice of that pie?

Wentworth Shire and Central Darling Shire have massive potential in cultural tourism, particularly in knowledge of water and land management from the oldest continuous living civilization. There is significant cultural material and educational benefit to be had and we know there is an international market. Distance limits access for many tourists and without water, we have no hope of attracting more tourists into our regions.

What impact would reduced native fish have on this economy?

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Industry of Employment – Proportion of Employed Persons

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Deloitte study in conjunction with the MDBA “Benefits of the Basin Plan for the fishing industries in the Murray-Darling Basin”³ suggests “The assumption that additional water is managed with native fish as an objective along with the other ecological, social and economic objectives of the Plan is critical to achieving beneficial impacts on fishing industries, a more but poorly managed water is likely to have a negligible impact.”

The MDBA Technical report “Ecological needs of low flows in the Barwon-Darling” explains the sensitivity of the area

“Vulnerable or endangered species such as the olive perchlet, Murray cod, silver perch and freshwater catfish, have been recorded amongst the 15 native species of fish known to inhabit the Barwon-Darling.”

It refers to a yet-to-be-released report “The new research by Stuart and Sharpe (2017) is developing improved flow management plans for golden perch, which is demonstrating the importance of protecting flow events in the northern Basin through to the nursery habitat of the Menindee lakes to support strong age classes dispersing into the southern connected basin and back up into the northern Basin from the Menindee lakes.”

It goes on “However, an environmental flow requirement that forms just one aspect of the plan has been included in this report. This is a flow of 3,000 ML/d for at least 20 days at Mungindi to support regular local spawning cues, larval drift, and in-channel development of juvenile fish.”

“For the greatest outcomes substantial flows.....are needed to pass through to the Menindee Lakes and beyond. It is recognized that a series of flows over multiple years will be needed to meet the spawning, dispersal, nursery recruitment, and then juvenile dispersal of golden perch to achieve the system scale population recovery.”

We suggest Menindee Lakes be converted to an Ecosystem nursery and environmental storage, with reserve of stock and domestic flows for lower Darling residents, stock and recreational activities.

Recommendation: Recognise the Menindee Lakes as the womb of the Murray-Darling system and list it as an icon wetlands site of National importance.

International conventions must be upheld

³ “Benefits of the Basin Plan for the fishing industries in the Murray-Darling Basin” Deloitte Access Economics 9 July 2012

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Australia is signatory to international conventions on Biodiversity and Migratory birds. Menindee Lakes are integral in both of these compacts and it would be a legal question as to how these conventions are breached by not taking into account environmental considerations where they are concerned.

Let the river flow

Until there is evidence of no impact on the Murray River of increased supply to South Australia under the Murray-Darling Basin plan, formerly supplied via the Menindee Lakes, we suggest a substantial reserve be maintained in the Menindee Lakes system, for the benefit of the environment, sensitive and vital native fish nurseries and the people and their livelihoods and the biodiversity, ecology and sheer amenity of the lower Darling.

Summary

- Ensure inflows by metering and enforcing rules and restrictions upstream;
- Enter into water and land management agreements with traditional owners and custodians;
- Uphold minimum flow targets along the entire river system (not just “icon” sites);
- Replace Pooncarie weir to its original site and height;
- Maintain minimum storage at Menindee Lakes of 800GL;
- Monitor and publically report water quality at Wilcannia, Menindee weir, Pooncarie and Murray weir pool;
- Allow continual flows where possible, rather than speedy draining of the lakes;
- Consult more often with local community members (real consultation, not instruction) to achieve more collaborative understanding of the river system and management requirements;
- Adhere to promises to send regular flows along the Anabranche (as originally agreed); and
- NO MORE PIPELINES!

An aerial photograph of a wide river with a dam in the middle. The banks are covered in dense green forest. The water is a deep blue color. The sky is clear and blue.

Industry Technical Forum on Water Metering and Telemetry

Technical Forum Feedback Report

6 August 2018

Industry technical forum on water metering and telemetry

In March 2018 as part of the Water Reform Action Plan (WRAP) the NSW Government released a consultation paper about water take measurement and metering, and held a series of meetings seeking the community's views on how a robust metering policy could be implemented in NSW.

After consideration of the feedback from community, industry and stakeholders, a draft NSW metering policy for non-urban water metering was released, and the Water Management Amendment Act 2018 was introduced setting up a framework to implement a more robust metering policy.

A copy of the NSW metering Framework can be accessed [here](#)

Consultation with the community on the regulation and policy is scheduled for 27 August – 30 September 2018.

As part of the policy and regulation development process, the Department of Industry-Lands and Water (Department) convened an Industry Technical Forum to seek advice on the technical and operational aspects of the proposed metering policy, particularly telemetry, data requirements and options for in-situ verification of meters. Over 70 people attended, including water users, meter and telemetry manufacturers and installers, relevant state and Commonwealth government agencies, and academics with expertise in hydraulic engineering, data and telecommunications.

The forum was highly constructive and provided practical “on the ground” information that has been used by the Department to shape the metering framework, and ensure the approach will achieve the Government’s objectives, is practical to implement, and importantly is cost effective.



The purpose of the forum was to test the practicality of the proposed requirements and assist the development of the metering regulations and policy to ensure they are practical and do not have unintended consequences. The forum addressed specific discussion questions on requirements around:



Metering particularly in-situ verification



Telemetry data requirements, data format, data security, maintenance and 'black spots'.

The overarching messages from the forum were:

- Certainty is important – there needs to be a clear and credible regulatory system.
- There are many complicated and inter-related aspects – it will be necessary to identify flexible and creative solutions to meet the required outcomes.

- Economies of scale – there are clear opportunities for efficiencies in delivering metering and telemetry services.
- Cost implications – there is a need to minimise/ manage cost implications of the reforms.

Specifically for metering:

- There are technology options available for in-situ verification for a range of meters (including open channel) that are reasonably accurate/ reliable.
- Consideration to be given to the cost effectiveness of verification, particularly in remote areas.
- The practicality of undertaking in-situ verification needs to consider a range of variables (e.g. where infrastructure might be buried) – this should be reflected in fit-for-purpose regulation or guidelines.
- Concerns were raised here may not be enough suitably qualified persons to undertake in-situ

accuracy verification within the proposed staged roll-out timeframes – if new training programs are required they will have lead times.

Specifically for telemetry:

- Data security is important – need to be clear on who owns and manages the data, and whether the water user can access data for their own purposes.
- There are technology options available to overcome communication black spots – but different options have different potential costs.
- Data required to be captured includes at a minimum: the water user, date, time and quantity of water taken. It was suggested that this information should be transmitted daily.

The following provides a more comprehensive summary of the feedback received that was directly related to the questions posed by the Department during the forum.



Telemetry System

Metering: In-Situ Verification

What technologies are available for in-situ verification and how reliable are they?

- A number of technologies, and methods were identified for in-situ accuracy verification including:
 - Velocity: Strap-on Ultrasonic and Laser
 - Dye tracers/salt: dose with something that can be detected, mixing and velocity to be considered
 - Flow-rig: potentially an expensive option
 - Dongle in-situ verification tool
 - E-health check: alarm when out of spec
- Stakeholders highlighted different levels of reliability/accuracy within the range of technologies that were identified and that there are no clear standards that apply.
- It was noted that there is no point verifying a meter if it has not been installed accurately, highlighting the importance of validating existing meters as a first step.
- It was suggested that a flexible regulatory approach was needed that could provide options for differing circumstances and variabilities (e.g. buried infrastructure).

Is in-situ verification of accuracy feasible for all types of installations, and within the timeframes proposed for the five year staged roll out? If not available, is there an effective alternative?

- As a principle, it was noted where water is measured, accuracy can be verified.
- It was suggested most types of installations can be verified, including open channels, however there

may be issues around accuracy/cost associated with large diameter pumps.

- A number of stakeholders noted the need to build a credible and robust in-situ verification regulatory framework that incorporates flexibility, as well as protecting consumers and workers. Consideration should also be given to grandfathering or amnesty provisions where there are exceptional circumstances.
- Cost implications were raised. For example where existing infrastructure may require excavation, or is remote it may be expensive to undertake a single in-situ verification.
- It was also suggested it may be more feasible in some cases to replace a meter rather than test for accuracy.
- A stakeholder noted that open channel verification through ultrasonic and radar technology is cost effective.
- A staged roll-out was suggested as a way of achieving economies of scale by focussing on particular regions (e.g. reduced travel times and greater competition from verifiers).
- There was general agreement that in-situ verification could occur within the five year period provided there are clear rules, a flexible approach is taken, and there is a focus on high risk areas in the first instance.

Are there people in the market with appropriate expertise for in-situ verification? If not, what can be done to fill the gap?

- There was a general view

there is not currently a sufficient quantity of people with expertise to undertake in-situ accuracy verification. However, it was acknowledged that the market will be able to respond in a timely way provided there is a clear regulatory regime established, and sufficient certainty around the requirements.

- It was noted there were some people in the market at the regional level with in-situ verification experience.
- It was suggested that a set of accreditation standards could be established and that Irrigation Australia and Australian Hydrographers Association (AHA) would have expertise in this area.

For irrigation installations where it may not be feasible to install a pattern approved meter in compliance with AS4747, can in-situ verification processes provide an adequate pathway for ensuring these meters are accurate, auditable and verifiable?

- It was suggested that there may be limitations for obtaining pattern approved, AS4747 compliant meters for open channels and large diameter pumps.
- A stakeholder suggested open channels could be verified in-situ to +/- 5% cost effectively using ultrasonic and radar technology. It was also suggested that flow gauging can be used for verification of open channels.



Lateral Move Irrigation System

Telemetry

Data requirements: What are the most effective and cost efficient options for frequency of data capture and transmission? How long should the data be stored within the data logger?

- There was general agreement that compliance with minimum requirements around data and transmission would not be an issue.
- The cost will vary depending on the service provider (e.g. high frequency of data transmission via satellite is associated with a higher cost than say 3G). Options put forward for data transmission include 3G, 4G, satellite,

LoRa data network and broadband. There was general agreement there are a range of options for transmission of data that have varying cost implications.

- There was general consensus that data should be kept for a minimum of one year.
- Data security was raised as an issue, particularly when a third party is involved. Suggestions were put forward that a chain of custody needs to be proven.
- It was suggested that the Government will need to prescribe requirements, content and needs for data as this will determine

the options for the data format and frequency requirements.

- Limits on data logger storage are associated with the Secure Data card (SD card should be larger) and generally there is redundancy in meters (i.e. data is recorded in meter before the data logger).
- It was suggested that the transmission of data could be risk based. For example, it could be required daily at a minimum, with more regular transmission for higher risk areas.



Telemetry System

Data format: In what format does the data need to be collected and/or transmitted? What data protocols are required to ensure that data can be ingested and analysed efficiently by Government, and also accessed by water users for use on farm?

- There were suggestions put forward that the Government needs to issue a data template that prescribes the content and the need for the data, and the market will respond accordingly. This could include user, date, time and water usage as well as condition monitoring data. It was suggested that the regulations should include what is required to be reported and supporting policy could include formats that the data should be provided in.
- It was suggested that the required data format will depend on what part of Government will be using the data.
- There was general agreement amongst stakeholders that the farmer/irrigator should be able to access the data, which will ensure compliance with requirements, as well as provide opportunities for improved on-farm management practices.
- The cost of a smart logger versus a smart system was discussed. It was suggested that a basic and low cost data logger could be used if the system had the 'smarts' (i.e. data is sent back to a smart system that does the analysis).

Security: What are the security risks associated with the transmission of meter data? What measures could mitigate these risks?

- There was a substantial discussion around who would own/manage the data obtained from the meter and telemetry network. It was suggested that the data could theoretically be owned by a number of stakeholders including the service provider, a third party data storage provider or the Government.
- A range of risks/issues were raised depending on who owned/managed the data including:
 - breach of data including tampering with results, theft of commercially sensitive information etc.
 - who is responsible if there is a malfunction, error, or breach of security in data collection and storage?
 - installers, or other parties, manipulating/tampering with the parameters and data outputs (not the physical meter) to falsify results. This could occur at both the local level or more systemically across the entire water data collection network.
- Whilst the risks were acknowledged, there was a general view that any regulatory system should be proportionate to the actual level of risk.
- Mitigation measures suggested included:
 - a certain regulatory regime proportionate to the level of risk.
 - clarification about access to and ownership of data.
- With regard to data access, a number of

stakeholders suggested the farmer/irrigator should be able to access any data collected about their own water usage which could also have significant benefits for on-farm practices.

Maintenance: What is the best practice maintenance for telemetry? What is a reasonable timeframe for telemetry equipment to be repaired?

- Some stakeholders differentiated between physical repairs to the infrastructure, compared to faults, and the need for different regulatory requirements.
- Physical maintenance requirements were primarily identified as solar panel maintenance/cleaning and/or battery replacement. It was suggested maintenance of physical infrastructure should be undertaken every 1-5 years.
- It was suggested that anywhere between 10 business days and up to 3 weeks would be reasonable timeframes for faulty telemetry equipment to be repaired. This takes into account travel time and ordering/repair of parts.
- During the down time, the meter could be required to have a certain amount of storage if the telemetry system failed.

Black spots: What are the options of telemetry systems to operate in mobile network 'black spots' and how does this affect costs?

- There was a general view that transmission black spots can be overcome relatively easily and often cost effectively with current technology.
- A range of alternative options were discussed which overcome black spots and are cost effective.
- It was noted that satellites can cover any area - the key issue is the cost of accessing the transmission network. It was also noted by a stakeholder that data loggers can be adaptable for reporting if there is limited coverage.
- It was also suggested that telemetry requirements should be flexible enough to ensure that they allow a range of transmission providers to ensure flexibility for future technological advances.



Image: Barwon River

More information

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