



Murray Darling Association Inc.

www.mda.asn.au

ABN: 64 636 490 493

Region 5 Secretary
Kelvin Goldstone – Mid Murray Council
kgoldstone@mid-murray.sa.gov.au
8564 6020

Agenda

Region 5 – Annual General Meeting

Renmark Paringa Council Offices
61 18th Street, Renmark

Monday 6 March, 2017 at 10.00am
(Morning tea available from 9.30am)

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

1.2 Apologies

Stephan Knoll MP
Tony Pasin MP
Cr Jack Gibb

Member for Schubert
Member for Barker
Renmark Paringa Council

2. WELCOME

Russell Peate – Chief Executive Officer, Mid Murray Council

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGION 5 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Moved _____ Seconded _____
that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 July 2014 be taken as read and confirmed.
Seconded

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report

A copy of the Chief Executive Officer's report is attached. Refer Appendix 4.1.

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING

5.1 Regional Issues and Priorities – Emma Bradbury, Chief Executive Officer

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Combined MDA Regions Meeting

Notes from meeting held on 5 October 2016 are attached. Refer Appendix 6.1.

6.2 MDA Position Statement – Amendments to the Basin Plan

A copy of the Position Statement is attached. Refer Appendix 6.2.

6.3 Information Sessions – Murray Darling Basin Plan

A copy of a press release is attached. Refer Appendix 6.3.

6.4 MDA Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Barnaby Joyce – Outcome Report

A copy of the Outcome Report is attached. Refer Appendix 6.4.

6.5 Hon Ian Hunter MLC, Minister for Water and the River Murray

A copy of letter received is attached. Refer Appendix 6.5.

6.6 Mid Murray Council – Submission on the Proposed Amendment to the Basin Plan

A copy of Mid Murray Council's submission is attached. Refer Appendix 6.6.

6.7 2017 Murray Darling Association Conference – Dates

Date confirmed as 11, 12 & 13 October 2017.

6.8 Renmark Paringa Council – National Conference and AGM

A copy of correspondence received is attached. Refer Appendix 6.8.

6.9 Cr Peter Raison – Mid Murray Council

Apology re comments at Region 5 meeting held at Waikerie on 10 October 2016. Refer Appendix 6.9.

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY

Resolution from Previous Meeting held on 10 October 2016

*Cr Mark Ward moved that the positions of Chairperson and Secretary (including secretarial support) be filled by Berri Barmera and Renmark Paringa Councils in accordance with Region 5 rotation policy.
Seconded Peter Smith.*

CARRIED.

7.1 Appointment of Chairperson

Moved _____ Seconded _____
that _____ be appointed Chairperson of Region 5 for the
period _____.

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY CONT'D

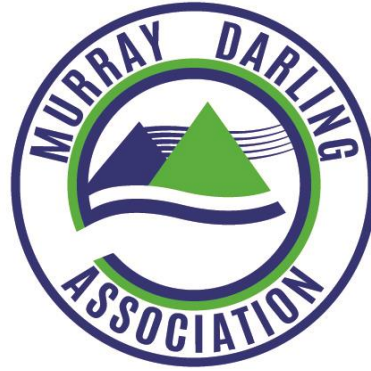
7.2 Appointment of Secretary

Moved _____ Seconded _____
that _____ be appointed Secretary of Region 5 for the period
_____.

8. NEXT MEETING

9. CLOSE

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks
Renmark Paringa Council for hosting this meeting of Region 5*



Chief Executive Officer's Region Report Feb 2017

Prepared by: Emma Bradbury

Chief Executive Officer
Murray Darling Association
463 High Street
Echuca Vic 3564

Phone: (03) 5480 3805
Email: e.bradbury@mda.asn.au
Website: www.mda.asn.au

1. Diary

25/11/16	MDA Board Meeting 362	Albury
28/11/16	Meeting – QMDC	Toowoomba
29/11/2016	Meeting – Mayor and CEO Toowoomba Regional Council	Toowoomba
29/11/2016	Meeting – CEO Southern Downs Regional Council	Warwick
30/11/2016	Meeting – CEO and Deputy Mayor Goondiwindi Regional Council	Goondiwindi
1/12/2016	Presentation – Namoi Councils Joint Organization (8 councils)	Tamworth
1/12/2016	Presentation – Western District Regional Councils Annual Conference (12 councils and community)	St George, Balonne Shire
2/12/2016	Meeting with Advisor on Water to QLD Water Minister Dr Anthony Lyneham	Brisbane
14/12/2016	2017 National Conference Planning Meeting	Skype
15/12/2016	Meeting – Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce	Sydney
22/12/2016	Meeting – The Hon Bob Katter	Charters Towers
6/01/2017	Meeting – MDBA REO Merrill Boyd	Echuca
11/01/2017	Meeting – Campaspe Shire CEO & Chair of Murray River Group	Echuca
17/01/2017	Meeting – Murray Rivers Council General Manager and Administrator	Moama
19/01/2017	Meeting – AICD to discuss sponsorship and collaboration (governance and strategy)	Melbourne
20/01/2017	Attend event – McArthur Group	Melbourne
20/01/2017	Meeting – MAV President, CEO and Dir Water Policy.	Melbourne
23/01/2017	Presentation – Council Workshop - Wangaratta Council	Wangaratta
25/01/2017	Meeting – Balonne Shire Council CEO	Goondiwindi
	Presentation – Council Workshop – Goondiwindi RC	Goondiwindi
	Meeting – MDBA Northern Basin Director	Toowoomba
01/02/2017	Meeting - Director of Southern Water Infrastructure Section Water Division, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	Echuca
02/02/2016	Meeting – Phillip Glyde – CEO MDBA	
02/02/2017	MDBA Community Information Session	Moama
07/02/2017	Presentation - Gannawarra Shire Council	Kerang

2. Strategy

Memberships

Engagement – Vigorous round of engagements with member and prospective member councils, as well as external stakeholders. Strong support being received via state LGAs, new and prospective member councils as well as regional groupings of councils.

Withdrawals

While we have experienced solid growth in new memberships, with interest from non-member councils continuing to grow, there is also a small but concerning trend of withdrawals across several regions, with councils no longer just continuing membership year on year. With council budgets tightening in a very material sense, councils are reviewing their membership spends across a range of organizations and if they are not seeing value or involvement, or alignment to their Council Plans, they are withdrawing memberships.

The MDA Strategic Plan and our advocacy priorities now demonstrate a strong alignment with the objectives of all Basin councils, but without effective communication and engagement, it will be increasingly difficult to retain existing memberships. Chairs and their councils need to actively consider their regional engagement strategies. (see also Finance notes below).

Joint Organisations and Groups of Councils

Increasing trend in Joint Organizations and Groups of Councils interested in joining as groups. A discount is available for group memberships.

Finance

MDA continues to operate on a budget that, while balanced and on track to deliver a modest surplus this year, is still far too lean to continue deliver on purpose at the rate and caliber commensurate with stakeholder expectations and opportunity. Importance of establishing a finance committee cannot be overstated.

Project opportunity with AICD to currently explore stronger governance and additional revenue stream. Proposal pending.

The board is establishing a finance committee to support stronger financial growth and

Advocacy Priorities

- MDA has written to all Basin Water Ministers requesting support for local government, via the MDA, to be formally recognized and included in the Basin Plan decision making processes, and an opportunity to meet to discuss this, and how the MDA and our member councils can better work with our state and federal government on the continuing implementation of the Basin Plan.

We have put the case that as the third level of government in Australia, and the one most directly connected to community, local government has a valuable contribution to make in the processes, community consultation, and the formulation of decisions made and taken in the continuing implementation of the Basin Plan.

Response to date has been positive.

- MDA has drafted a response and partnered with a number of member councils across the northern Basin in the preparation of a response/submission to the proposed Basin Plan amendments.
- MDA played an active role in seeking to mitigate adverse impact on local government and communities from the division between the states and the Federal Govt following the meeting of the Ministerial Council of Basin Governments in Adelaide in Nov 2016.

MDA Regional Boundary Review

Water resource plans (WRPs) set out how water resources will be managed. They are developed by the Basin states, or in certain circumstances by the Authority, for approval by the Commonwealth Water Minister.

A water resource plan area is a geographical area, of which there are 14 for surface water, 16 for groundwater and an additional six for surface water and groundwater combined. As far as possible, the boundaries match those of existing state water management areas.

Consider the merits of MDA regional alignments taking WRPs as well as LGA boundaries into consideration. Standing agenda item for all 2017 region meetings.

3. Projects

Social and Economic Impacts Evaluation Framework – funding still not yet secured to commence this project. Meetings in Canberra in March with a number of interested departmental stakeholders. Letters will go out to funding partners in the coming weeks.

Australian Institute of Company Directors – Following positive meetings in Melbourne, we are currently awaiting a project proposal from AICD.

4. Staff Matters

MDA is committed to nurturing new talent and skills. We have recently joined the Schools Friendly Businesses consortium in Campaspe, and have taken on a School Based Apprentice/Trainee, Annette Waters. Annette is student at Rochester Secondary College and has demonstrated an active involvement in community participation over several years.

5. Regions

Meetings calendar 2017 – It is the ideas generated and the minutes/resolutions of the region meetings that provide the *imprimatur* for the MDA to carry forward our advocacy priorities and deliver on our purpose. Region meetings must be well run and attended, with chairs and committees ensuring that member councils are aware of and engaged in the meetings.

Meeting schedules should be published on the MDA website. Any region that has not provided its 2017 meeting schedule to the MDA for publication on the website should do so immediately.

Region 12 – The MDA welcomes Balonne Shire Council Mayor Richard Marsh and CEO Matthew Magin to the role of Chair of Region 12. We look forward to their valuable contribution and detailed knowledge of Northern Basin issues.

6. In brief – updates

2017 National Conference and AGM Committee – tentative date set for 11-13 October. This event will be held in Renmark.SA. East Coast Conferences has been engaged and a committee formed to organist the conference, with a number of high caliber sponsors already having requested an opportunity to sponsor and present. Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and has accepted the MDA's invitation to open the conference.

Premises lease – 463-465 High Street Echuca lease with Parks Victoria renewed for a further 2 years. The co-location of these two organizations in Echuca-Moama is extremely favorable to the MDA, both financially and in providing an exceptionally high quality workplace and positive team environment.

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer

Notes on MDA joint meeting 5th October 2016

LGA hosted event.

9.30am start

Guest Speaker

John Virtue

GM Strategy, Policy and Invasive Species

Biosecurity SA

European Carp make up more than 60% of fish biomass in the river

The Carp Virus has a mortality rate in excess of 70% and only affects Common Carp and Koi Carp which are illegal in South Australia.

Maximum fish kill is at water temperatures of 17-26°C

Response to kill issues:

- Inadequate resources (people, equipment)
- Poor planning and coordination
- Safety
- Carcass disposal

Long term outcomes from virus release:

- Insufficient monitoring
- Lack of further complementary carp control and ecosystem recovery measures

Carp Herpes Virus is to be known just as Carp Virus. This would seem to be less emotive than Carp Herpes Virus.

MDA Members Present:

Michael Scott	Alexandrina Council, R6
Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council, R5
Keith Parkes	Alexandrina Council, LGA Board
Barry Featherston	Alexandrina Council, R6
Robin Coleman	City of Tea Tree Gully Council, R7
Lynda Yates	City of Holdfast Bay , R7
Pauline Frost	Life Member MDA, R7
David Shotliffe?	Town of Walkerville, R7
Ray Najjar	Member, R7
Denis Clark	CLGR Rep, R8 & LGA Board
Peter Jamieson	Chairperson (Metro), R7
Rhona Parker-Benton	SA Murray Darling Basin Region DEWNR
Dr John Virtue	PIRSA
Keith Loeser	MDA, R6
Julie Barrie	Coorong District Council, R6
Vern Leng	Coorong District Council, R6
Neville Jaensch	Coorong District Council, LGA Board
Emma Bradbury	CEO MDA via SKYPE

BUSINESS DISCUSSED, Brief Notes:

1) Constitution

EB

Content needs to be reflective of intent

Process must be seen as being open and be agreed to by clear majority

Almost all revisions have been taken into account

Review worked on retaining intent and principles of original Constitution

BF

Environmentally balanced river system has been included which was extremely important

Strategic Plan is more flexible and can cover some issues not in Const.

Proxy/Alternates not catered for. Councils can nominate at this level, rather than be in Const.

We need to accept the Constitution at the AGM to be able to move forward

VL

Alternates should come with written authority

EB

Clear distinction between Representative and Delegate. Representative = Regional level, Delegate = National level. The wording of the new constitution covers the gaps.

Detail and implementation can cascade out of this Const.

7) Recommendation of the Senate Enquiry

KP

Senate Enquiry was an absolute farce.

This should be strongly opposed

EB

R3 prepared this motion.

Members need a clear understanding of what content was proposed

NJ

The content is being discussed. This is what we cannot agree with.

BF

The recommendation included which talks of the removal of the barrages badly affects the Murray Mouth.

VL

Full report and recommendations available on Senate Committee website.

EB

Will ensure that recommendations are included with the motions

2) Strategic Plan

Noted

3) Basin Plan Implementation

EB

MDA – developing an assessment framework to assess social and economic impact. This will cost \$. Contributions may be sought from LGA, State and Federal Governments.

4) MDBA Regional Engagement Officers

BF

There will a 0.3 FTE at Murray Bridge
MDB Regional NRM Board have been given the money and authority to employ Regional Engagement Officers.

EB

Currently, 6 Local Engagement Officers are operating across the Basin.
The model NRM have used to employ these REOs has raised serious concerns.

5) Regional Issues Map

EB

Must be driven by local knowledge.

6) Review of Regional Boundaries

This needs to be for continuous improvement for the Association.

8) Darling River System

R4 actively supporting action for a sustainable river system

9) Lake Albert to Coorong Connector

Comment –‘Long Overdue’

10) Management of Lower Lakes

EB

Commends Coorong District Council for the process surrounding points 9,10,11,12
The content may be a little perennial.
Issues need to be on website as an education process.

DS

This group understand the issues. Other regions will need the education to assist in understanding them.

NJ

An issues paper needs to be included with motions so that all Regions can understand the issues.

EB

MDA is in a unique position for Regions from South to North to assist in the understanding of Basin issues across the whole Basin

11) Long Nosed Fur Seals

Emotive issues surround removal of LNFS.

EB

Challenges faced with working collaboratively with One Nation in this area.

12) Desalination and Clarence River Diversions

RN

Frank Tuckwell has information re the Clarence River. RN to send to Stephen for dissemination.

VL

Need to be finding ALTERNATIVE sources of water to help reduce the amount of water removed from the River.

EB

A speaker on desalination plant to be sourced for Conference. BF to contact

13) Climate Change

EB

This is being addressed with a panel at the conference

KL

We need to start looking at issues surrounding climate change NOW

DC

EPA restrictions on water re-use are restrictive and in some cases rather senseless

14) Blue Green Algae R7

RN

Idea is right, but using the wording 'engage' makes it difficult to action

EB

This motion in its current form is not implementable but it is included to get people thinking about the issue.

15) Tourism

EB

Tourism is not high on many agendas. Tourism will stand up in the next few years so we must be ready.

16) Motion for Meeting Critical Human Water Needs

VL

These seem to go with points 9,10,12,13

RN

We need to *keep* advocating strongly

Murray Darling Association Summing up from Emma Bradbury:

The MDA is moving to a new era. The conference sums this up well.

We are moving to a more structured, disciplined, organised and local government supported approach.

PR

Water savings. A lot of misunderstanding of issues across the Regions/States. Regions need to ensure we share our issues and knowledge across borders.

LY

Need to produce a regular bulleting with relevant info re current issues.

EB

Cannot produce any documentation with current staffing level.

BF

Perhaps Riverland LGA could look at doing this as a PR exercise

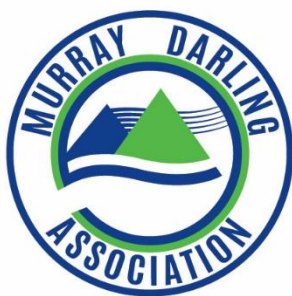
EB

Basin Bulletin should be re-established as resources permit.

Next Forum:

Late February

BF to organise Minster Hunter as Guest Speaker.



admin@mda.asn.au
 www.mda.asn.au
 T (03) 5480 3805
 ABN: 64 636 490 493

463 High Street
 P.O. Box 1268
 Echuca, Vic 3564

Position Statement

on

The 2016 Proposed Amendments to the Basin Plan

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) represents over 100 member councils across all 4 states of the Murray-Darling Basin, with memberships increasing.

The MDA supports the Basin Plan, and acknowledges that it has been agreed to by the Commonwealth, the ACT and the four Basin States, via the Intergovernmental Agreement on Implementing Water Reform in the Murray Darling Basin (the IGA).

The MDA has backed a united approach to the implementation of the Basin Plan that optimises social, economic, and environmental outcomes for our local communities from the outset.

The MDA is committed to support the objectives of the Water Act 2007, particularly *Sect. 3(c) to promote the use and management of the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic, social, and environmental outcomes.*

The MDA acknowledges the work done by the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and recognises the findings of the Northern Basin Review underpinning the proposed Basin Plan amendments. We note particularly the importance of the *toolkit measures* accompanying the proposed 320GL amendment.

The MDA recognises the research and further work by the CSIRO and others in establishing the requirements for the Basin Plan to achieve targeted social, economic, and environmental benefits for the River Murray communities, and is committed to pursue these outcomes through all reasonable measures.

The MDA will consult with our members to provide Regional submissions on the proposed Basin Plan amendments that consider local and regional perspectives.

The MDA notes that review mechanisms built into the Basin Plan are essential to the effective implementation of the Plan that must, by nature be responsive to the needs of the community, business and industries across the Basin, to the environment, and to the efficiencies achieved.

The MDA supports adaptive management practices, managed review, and reasonable amendments to the targets set in the Plan where such amendments minimise social and economic impacts on Basin communities and can deliver relative equivalence in environmental outcomes by taking a more targeted approach to water recovery, via efficiency measures and supply measures.

The MDA supports the application of an evidence based approach to the amendment of any targets and calls for the affected communities to have a formal role via local government in the review process.

The MDA recognises that adjustments to the Basin Plan can consist of adjustments to targeted volumes, where equal or better environmental outcomes can be achieved through improvements to water quality, efficiencies, and supply measures.

The MDA is committed to ensure that local government and the communities we represent are not returned to the uncertainty and division that emerged during the time of the consultation on the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan, and calls on all governments to demonstrate leadership and cooperation.

The MDA encourages all states and all levels of government to remain focused on and committed to the objectives of the Water Act 2007 (Sect 3) and the management objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the Basin Plan 2012 (Chapter 5). (see extract below).

The MDA encourages the Commonwealth, the ACT and the four Basin States to remain committed to cooperate in the implementation of the SDL Adjustment Mechanism.

The MDA calls for all levels of government, including local government, to work together to deliver optimum benefits for all Basin communities as the adjustment and review mechanisms set into the Basin Plan are worked through.

The MDA is committed to membership driven, non-partisan cooperation with our state and federal government counterparts to implement the Basin Plan to maintain a healthy natural environment, optimise social and economic impacts, and build confidence to our agricultural sector and rural communities.

The MDA, as local governments' peak representative body on Basin issues is the level of government that can best listen to the community and deliver balanced opinions and shared local knowledge to our state and federal counterparts on the effects of the implementation.

The MDA member councils, across all four states of the Basin recognise and advocate that 'we are all in this together' for the benefit of Basin communities.

The MDA calls for all levels of government to work together on the implementation of the Basin Plan, and for all responsible state and federal leaders to listen to the concerns of their local communities.

The MDA will continue to work for local government to be formally included in state and federal discussions on the ongoing adjustments to and implementation of the Basin Plan.

For further details

Cr David Thurley National President 0419 510 274 dthurley@alburycity.vic.gov.au	Emma Bradbury Chief Executive Officer 0429 905 017 e.bradbury@mda.asn.au	Cr Barry Featherston Vice President 0417 808 565 Barry.featherston@alexandrina.sa.gov.au
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[End]

WATER ACT 2007 - SECT 3

Objects

The objects of this Act are:

- (a) to enable the Commonwealth, in conjunction with the Basin States, to manage the Basin water resources in the national interest; and
- (b) to give effect to relevant international agreements (to the extent to which those agreements are relevant to the use and management of the Basin water resources) and, in particular, to provide for special measures, in accordance with those agreements, to address the threats to the Basin water resources; and
- (c) in giving effect to those agreements, to promote the use and management of the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes.

BASIN PLAN 2012

Chapter 5—Management objectives and outcomes to be achieved by Basin Plan

5.02 Objectives and outcome for Basin Plan as a whole

- (1) The objectives for the Basin Plan as a whole are:
 - (a) to give effect to relevant international agreements through the integrated management of Basin water resources; and
 - (b) to establish a sustainable and long-term adaptive management framework for the Basin water resources, that takes into account the broader management of natural resources in the Murray-Darling Basin; and
 - (c) to optimise social, economic and environmental outcomes arising from the use of Basin water resources in the national interest; and
 - (d) to improve water security for all uses of Basin water resources.
- (2) The outcome for the Basin Plan as a whole is a healthy and working Murray-Darling Basin that includes:
 - (a) communities with sufficient and reliable water supplies that are fit for a range of intended purposes, including domestic, recreational and cultural use; and
 - (b) productive and resilient water-dependent industries, and communities with confidence in their long-term future; and
 - (c) healthy and resilient ecosystems with rivers and creeks regularly connected to their floodplains and, ultimately, the ocean.

Community voices heard at Basin Plan amendment information sessions

09 December 2016

Around 450 people from across the northern basin have made time to attend information sessions about proposed amendments to the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

Twelve information sessions have been held across the northern basin in the past two weeks by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to explain the proposed amendments that include a 70 gigalitre reduction in the water recovery target for the north.

MDBA Chief Executive, Phillip Glyde, thanked all those who had attended the meetings for their questions and for sharing their views about the proposed amendments.

"I recognise that this is a busy time of year for people but we think it is very important to explain the reasoning behind the proposed amendments and hear from those communities that will be directly affected," Mr Glyde said.

"We appreciate that there is considerable uncertainty and concern for some people about what the amendments might mean for them and the information sessions have been a great opportunity to hear their concerns and answer questions.

"We've heard the full range of views in the past couple of weeks about whether we have got the right balance between environmental, social, cultural and economic needs.

"Feedback has varied significantly depending on the catchment with some attendees expressing disappointment that the proposed water recovery target is not higher while others are equally disappointed it is not lower."

Mr Glyde said consultation in the north is ongoing with the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations also organising nine information sessions and workshops through until mid-January 2017. Dates and locations of these meetings are available at:

<http://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/northern-basin/information-sessions>

"It is important that Aboriginal people have the opportunity to really engage in this process given the cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance water has for Aboriginal communities," Mr Glyde said.

"We also have some meetings planned in the southern basin in January because we recognise that a change in one part of the system will be of interest to others. It is a

chance to reassure those in the southern basin that changes in the north won't impact water entitlement holders in the south.

"I want to make sure we can answer questions and gauge views so we can determine whether the proposed amendment is the one that should be recommended to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

"Those who weren't able to make an information session can still have their questions answered by emailing engagement@mdba.gov.au or calling 1800 230 067."

Submissions are open until 10 February, 2017, and can be made online, by email or via the post.

Following the submissions period the MDBA will consider whether the amendment should be adjusted before consulting with basin state ministers and providing to the Minister for introduction to parliament.

For more information about the Basin Plan amendment process or to make a submission go to www.mdba.gov.au/BPamendments

ENDS

For more information, contact the MDBA Media office at media@mdba.gov.au or 02 6279 0141

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Sitemap

Melissa Marschall

Subject: FW: MDA meets with Deputy Prime Minister The Hon Barnaby Joyce to discuss local governments role in the Basin Plan **Please distribute to all councillors**

----- Original message -----

From: Emma Bradbury <e.bradbury@mda.asn.au>

Date: 16/12/2016 18:04 (GMT+09:30)

To: Emma Bradbury <e.bradbury@mda.asn.au>

Subject: MDA meets with Deputy Prime Minister The Hon Barnaby Joyce to discuss local governments role in the Basin Plan **Please distribute to all councillors**

Following a meeting with Minister Joyce yesterday, I am pleased to provide the following report to our member councils and stakeholders on the discussions held. I am confident that future discussions between MDA and the Minister will provide a strong voice for member councils and communities across all our MDA Regions. I encourage the active engagement and participation of your council to inform our regional and national advocacy priorities across the Basin.

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) yesterday met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, The Hon Barnaby Joyce to discuss issues pertaining to the Basin Plan, and the role of local government in its continuing implementation. Discussions focussed on the importance of outcomes achieving balanced social, economic and environmental benefits via the Plan for rural and regional communities across the Basin.

“We are all in this together,” Minister Joyce said. “We must be adaptive and innovative if we are to implement the Plan without hurting communities further. Communities live out the realities of water policy and communities must demand balanced outcomes. The Coalition Government has made it clear that we want to deliver the plan through infrastructure and SDL Adjustment projects, not buybacks. We can only do that through cooperation between Basin state governments and communities.”

Minister Joyce’s sentiments in this area align strongly with the position held by the MDA, providing a strong foundation for further discussions between local government and our state and federal counterparts. The MDA advocated strongly in 2014/2015 and was instrumental in seeing legislation to cap buy-backs passed in September 2015. Our member councils made clear that the continuing buy-backs were inflicting severe long term social and economic harm on Basin communities, and that local government supported the pursuit of the Plan’s environmental outcomes via efficiency measures, complementary projects and infrastructure investment.

MDA National President Cr David Thurley is pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

“It makes sense for local government to have a formal role along with State and Federal governments in progressing the Plan,” he said. “As the level of government that engages most immediately with our community and can deliver balanced opinions and shared local knowledge to our state and federal government counterparts, we will continue press the case for local government to have a formal stake in the Plan’s ongoing implementation.”

“It was an excellent meeting, and we value the relationship the MDA has with the Minister and his Department. Minister Joyce has a lively and direct view on delivering balanced outcomes that benefit Basin communities, and we look forward to working further with him, and with the States in the continuing implementing the Basin Plan.”

The MDA represents over 100 member councils across all 4 states of the Murray-Darling Basin, and is local governments’ peak representative body on Basin issues.

The MDA is committed to represent and advocate for our member councils and communities, and to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources. For further information on this report, or your council’s engagement with the MDA please contact this office or your regional Chairman.

Kind regards



Emma Bradbury B.Soc Sci, Grad.Dip Ed, MAICD

Chief Executive Officer

Murray Darling Association Inc.

A: 463 High Street, Echuca VIC 3564 | P: (03) 5480 3805

M: 0429 905 017 E: e.bradbury@mda.asn.au | W: www.mda.asn.au



Government
of South Australia

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC

16WRM806688

Mr Dave Burgess
Mayor
Mid Murray Council
PO Box 28
MANNUM SA 5238

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave".

Dear Mr Burgess

As a valued stakeholder with an interest in seeing the Basin Plan delivered, I am writing to you to let you know the outcomes of our latest fight to ensure the Basin Plan is delivered in full and on time.

The Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce wrote to me in November 2017 indicating that he no longer supported the recovery of the extra 450 GL needed to deliver a healthy River Murray.

We responded with a demand for the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to recommit to the Murray Darling Basin Plan or face the full force of a reinvigorated Fight for the Murray campaign.

We also took the fight to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

Our community and our politicians stood up for South Australia on this issue and we have secured an important victory.

The Prime Minister has recently written to the Premier re-affirming his government's commitment to the Basin Plan package agreed in 2012 and all associated programmes.

The Basin Plan has now become a standing item on the agenda of COAG allowing the Council to monitor progress in its delivery.

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
Minister for Water and the River Murray
Minister for Climate Change

Level 9, Chesser House, 91-97 Grenfell Street Adelaide SA 5000 | GPO Box 1047 Adelaide SA 5001 DX 138
Tel 08 8463 5680 | Fax 08 8463 5681 | Email minister.hunter@sa.gov.au | www.premier.sa.gov.au



COAG has also requested that an implementation plan be prepared by April 2017 that provides a credible and balanced pathway to implement the Basin Plan package agreed in 2012.

This puts us back on track to deliver the Basin Plan in full.

However we must continue to be vigilant and maintain a strong and united approach to ensure other Basin governments meet their commitments.

Thank you for your support on this critical issue for our state.

Yours sincerely



IAN HUNTER MLC

Minister for Water and the River Murray.

5 / 1 / 2017



**MID MURRAY COUNCIL SUBMISSION
ON THE
PROPOSED BASIN AMENDMENTS
FOR THE NORTHERN BASIN**

10 February 2017



The Mid Murray Council is responsible for over 220kms of the Murray River from Cadell to Caloote in South Australia, including a number of river towns. During the prolonged drought from 2006 – 2010, the River Murray towns in South Australia were significantly affected both from tourism, agriculture and business. The houseboat industry and other tourism operators were also significantly affected. Should the Murray-Darling Basin Plan not be implemented in full, it is contended there is the potential for significant harm to the economy, tourism, agriculture, environment and community from future droughts. The Mid Murray Council forwarded a submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan on Regional Communities highlighting this.

The implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, in particular, environmental water flows has ensured not only environmental, but the economic sustainability of tourism, agriculture and business for communities along the Murray River in South Australia. The Mid Murray Council strongly highlights that the implementation of the Plan must continue for the benefit of such regional communities.

Indeed, good recent flows down the River Murray have provided huge environmental benefits to the system. Associate Professor, David Paton, an Ecologist from the University of Adelaide said while it was a step in the right direction, it would take years of similar flows to improve the wetlands.

“The quantum of water in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan – 3,200 gigalitres if delivered to the Coorong – will not secure the health of the whole system. The southern parts of the Coorong will struggle because water levels will be inadequate in most years”, he said.

The Mid Murray Council understands that the Basin Plan was put in place to ensure that all basin States, including South Australia, receive a fair share of water for all water users, securing the health and sustainability of the river system well into the future. Since the adoption of the Basin Plan, South Australia, strongly supported by the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board has been working hard to secure reliable and good quality water supplies that support healthy and productive industries, build community resilience and support our diverse ecosystems.

It is understood that the review of the Northern Basin as part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan was required as part of the Basin Plan Agreement signed in 2012. It is also understood that the information used for the Northern Basin was less well developed compared to that for the Southern Basin. It is highlighted that the Federal Minister has stated that the proposed amendments to the water recovery target in the Northern Basin must **not** be at the cost of flows or environmental outcomes in the Southern Connected Basin.

Indeed, State Ministers responsible for the River Murray and the Murray Darling Basin Authority at the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council held in November committed to ensuring that **any** changes arising from the Northern Basin Review will have no negative impacts on triple bottom line outcomes in the Southern Basin.

The Northern Basin Review states that the proposed reduction in the Northern Basin Recovery target (from 390 gigalitres to 320 gigalitres) is estimated to result in a 10 to 15 gigalitre reduction to average inflows to Menindee Lakes and that average flows to South Australia may be reduced by 5 to 10 gigalitres. These examples during dry years may be greater.

It is understood that the Murray Darling Basin Authority has stated that the effects of this will not be material, but to date has provided limited information to support this view. Further evidence and information must be provided.

The Northern Basin Review recommendation to reduce the Northern Basin water recovery target relies on the adoption of 'toolkit measures' by the New South Wales and Queensland Governments. The 'toolkit' is a mixture of flow-related and no-flow related measures designed to help deliver similar environmental outcomes despite the reduction in water recovery.

Arrangements will need to be put in place by the Australian Government with the New South Wales and Queensland Governments separate to the Basin Plan and currently there is no guarantee that this will occur.

These issues could potentially be addressed through:

- The MDBA providing better information on the effects on flows and outcomes in the Southern Basin over a range of water availability conditions.
- Agreements which commit all parties to the delivery of the tool-kit measures.
- Further discussions between the Basin States and MDBA to explore how negative impacts on the Southern Basin can be mitigated.

The Mid Murray Council strongly considers that the Murray Darling Basin Plan should be implemented in full in accordance with specified deadlines. Council is conscious of any reduction in flows to South Australia may undermine agreed Basin Plan outcomes.

In relation to the proposed changes to ground water in the Basin Plan Amendments, it is noted that the extraction limit for the Basin's ground water is proposed to be increased from 3,334GL per year to 3,494GL per year. In addition, management controls will need to be introduced by basin Government states to ensure the water take is still within sustainable limits and management rules must be included in the Water Resource Plans for the three review areas. It is considered that the management controls and rules should be public and should demonstrate that any potential impacts of increasing the SDL's above their current levels are minimal and have minimal impact.

The Mid Murray Council would appreciate its submission being taken into account as part of the Review.



Basin Plan amendments Proposed changes to groundwater

This snapshot provides an insight into the proposed Basin Plan amendments. There are two more snapshots available, covering the themes of practical amendments and the northern basin review.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan aims to safeguard one of Australia's key national assets, the Murray-Darling Basin. The basin covers more than one million square kilometres, provides water to almost three million Australians, houses 40 percent of Australia's farms and generates around \$19.4 billion annually from agricultural produce. It is also home to more than 46 species of native fish and 98 species of waterbirds.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) is the agency responsible for establishing the Basin Plan in consultation with state and Commonwealth governments, industries and communities. The MDBA has a role in implementing, monitoring and adapting the Plan.

Snapshot

- The Murray–Darling Basin Plan is about ensuring a healthy and productive system for future generations.
- At the time the Basin Plan was established, it was identified that there was a need to review the SDLs of three groundwater areas.
- The independent reviews were conducted by groundwater specialists from research institutions, CSIRO, Geoscience Australia, the MDBA, and state governments.
- There are proposed amendments to the sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) for groundwater in these three areas:
 - Eastern Porous Rock (New South Wales)
 - Western Porous Rock (New South Wales)
 - Goulburn–Murray (Victoria)
- The proposed changes from the three reviews and some other minor changes in South Australia will see the sustainable diversion limit for the extraction of the basin's groundwater increase from 3,334 gigalitres (GL) per year to 3,494 GL per year.
- The increases in extraction limits will have minimal potential impacts on the environment.
- These proposed amendments to the Basin Plan are open for public comment from 22 November 2016 to 24 February 2017. Any member of the public can make a submission in relation to what is being proposed.

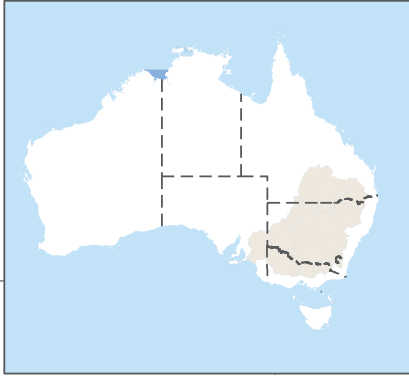
Groundwater in the Murray–Darling Basin

At the time the Basin Plan was established, it was recognised that scientific reviews of the SDLs were needed in relation to three groundwater areas in New South Wales and Victoria.


Groundwater is water that sits beneath the earth's surface contained in porous sands and fractured rocks, called aquifers. The level of the saturated portion of ground closest to the soil surface is called the water table.

Groundwater is a finite resource that is only replenished when rainfall or surface water seeps into the aquifers. Groundwater in the basin is used for a wide range of things — such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and town water supply. Water quality in many groundwater areas is not as good as surface water because of high salt levels. This limits the ways it can be used.

Proposed changes to SDLs in New South Wales and Victoria are a result of the three reviews that were required to be undertaken as part of the Basin Plan. These reviews were requested by the New South Wales and Victoria governments.



Proposed Basin Plan Groundwater Amendment WRP Areas

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Eastern Porous Rock (GW16) |  Wimmera - Mallee (GW3) |
|  Western Porous Rock (GW6) |  South Australian Murray Region (GW4) |
|  Goulburn-Murray (GW2) | |

Basin Plan amendments

Proposed changes to groundwater

Proposed changes to the Basin Plan

When the Basin Plan came into effect in 2012, it placed limits on how much water could be extracted from groundwater resources across the basin to ensure the continued sustainability of this water resource.

Based on the recommendations of the independent review panels, the MDBA is proposing changes to increase the amount of groundwater that can be extracted.

The proposed changes will see the extraction limit for the basin's groundwater increase from 3,334 GL per year to 3,494 GL per year.

However, certain management controls will need to be introduced by basin government states to ensure the water take is still within sustainable limits.

The independent review panels recommended the increased SDLs on the provision that the states demonstrate they could 'limit impacts from the increased SDLs to acceptable levels'. To ensure any potential impacts of increasing the SDLs above their current levels are minimal, management rules must be included in the water resource plans for the three review areas.



Eastern Porous Rock

This area covers inland north-east New South Wales within the bounds of Goondiwindi, Tamworth and Dubbo. The proposed SDL limit for this area will increase by 14.9 GL per year.

Eastern Porous Rock (groundwater) catchment areas	Current SDL (GL/y)	Proposed SDL (GL/y)	Change (GL/y)
Gunnedah — Oxley Basin Murray–Darling Basin catchment	114.5	127.5	+13.0
Sydney Basin Murray–Darling Basin SDL resource unit (GS41)	17.2	19.1	+1.9
Total	131.7	146.6	+14.9

Western Porous Rock

This area covers south-western New South Wales within the bounds of Broken Hill, Ivanhoe, Wentworth and the NSW/SA border. The proposed SDL for groundwater in this area will increase by 109.4 GL per year.

	Current SDL (GL/y)	Proposed SDL (GL/y)	Change (GL/y)
Total	116.6	226.0	+109.4

Goulburn–Murray

This area covers the eastern half of the basin in Victoria, from the upper Murray to the Avoca River. The proposed SDL for groundwater in this area will increase by 37.7 GL per year.

Goulburn–Murray (groundwater) catchment areas	Current SDL (GL/y)	Proposed SDL (GL/y)	Change (GL/y)
Goulburn–Murray: sedimentary plain SDL resource unit (GS8)	203.5	223.0	+19.5
Goulburn–Murray highlands SDL resource unit (GS8)	50.5	68.7	+18.2
Total	254	291.7	+37.7

Minor SDL adjustments

There are minor adjustments to SDLs for two groundwater areas.

A minor change has been proposed in the Wimmera–Mallee water resource plan area to align with the proposed boundary changes. There is no change in the overall SDL — 0.6 GL/y has moved from one SDL resource unit to another.

A minor change (<2.5 GL) to the South Australian Murray water resource plan area has been proposed, at the request of the South Australian government. This corrects an issue relating to which SDL resource unit some entitlement was located in.

Other practical changes

There are a range of practical changes to groundwater within the Basin Plan. These complement the proposed changes to the SDLs for the eastern and western porous rock and Goulburn–Murray groundwater areas.

We are also changing the descriptions of the NSW and Queensland SDL resource units to better align the Basin Plan with the state descriptions of the groundwater units.

Sustainable diversion limit resource units and compliance methodology

The MDBA is proposing a 10-year rolling average compliance method be used for groundwater areas. Under this method, a non-compliance with the SDL in a water year will occur if the average annual extraction, over the 10 year period, is greater than:

- the average annual permitted extraction over the same period, and
- the basin state government does not have a reasonable excuse for taking excess water.

Local management rules and adjustment to review provision

As a result of the formal reviews into groundwater, management rules are proposed to be made mandatory so as to limit local impacts to acceptable levels. Management rules aim to deal with whether a water resource plan needs to include rules to protect the structural integrity of groundwater units and water quality.

The MDBA is also proposing an additional change, which will provide an opportunity for New South Wales and Victoria to review the effectiveness of the local management rules whenever the water resource plan is reviewed.

The MDBA's decision making process

The limitations placed on extracting groundwater are designed to protect the aquifers, including their structural integrity, hydraulic properties, surface and groundwater connectivity, groundwater dependent ecosystems and water quality.

The expert review panel, which assessed groundwater extraction in these three areas, comprised of an independent chair and representatives from Geosciences Australia, National Centre for Groundwater Research & Training, the MDBA, CSIRO, independent consultants, and the NSW Office of Water.

Following these reviews, the MDBA is confident that through these proposed changes, enough groundwater will be available for the environment, but if its use is required, it can be effectively maximised by communities and industries.

The increases in extraction limits will have minimal potential impacts on the environment, as mandatory rules will be in place for basin state governments to offset any effects. Any potential effect from the changes will only occur when the current limits are exceeded, which is unlikely in the short to medium term.



More information

Underpinning this proposed Basin Plan amendment is substantial background research and materials from reviews of groundwater. These can be found on the MDBA website mdba.gov.au and include:

- legal materials outlining proposed amendments
- review panel reports
- technical research reports

You can also contact us on 1800 230 067 or by email engagement@mdba.gov.au and we will do our best to answer your questions. The website will be regularly updated with frequently asked questions.

Next steps

The *Water Act 2007* requires that any changes the MDBA proposes to the Basin Plan requires a minimum eight week public consultation. The MDBA invites submissions from interested parties to provide feedback or to support the proposed changes to the Basin Plan.

Formal submissions can be received up until **5pm (AEST) 24 February 2017.**

To make a submission visit our website
mdba.gov.au/BPamendments

You can also send an email to
submissions@mdba.gov.au

or post a submission to:

Basin Plan Amendment Submissions
Murray–Darling Basin Authority
GPO BOX 2256
CANBERRA ACT 2601

After all submissions are received, they will be reviewed and a report will be drafted. The MDBA will finalise any proposed amendments and make a recommendation to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

Once the Minister makes a decision the amendments will be tabled in parliament.

Images: Arthur Mostead
Front cover: Farmer with bore pump, Darling Downs QLD
Page 4: Solar powered bore pump, Coorong SA
Page 7: Silverbeet crop irrigated with groundwater, Toowoomba, QLD





Australian Government



Basin Plan amendments Northern Basin Review

This snapshot provides an insight into the proposed Basin Plan amendments. There are two more snapshots available, covering the themes of groundwater and practical amendments.

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan aims to safeguard one of Australia’s key national assets, the Murray–Darling Basin. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) is the agency responsible for establishing the Basin Plan in consultation with state and Commonwealth governments, industries and communities. The MDBA has a role in implementing and monitoring the Basin Plan and reviewing it in light of experience.

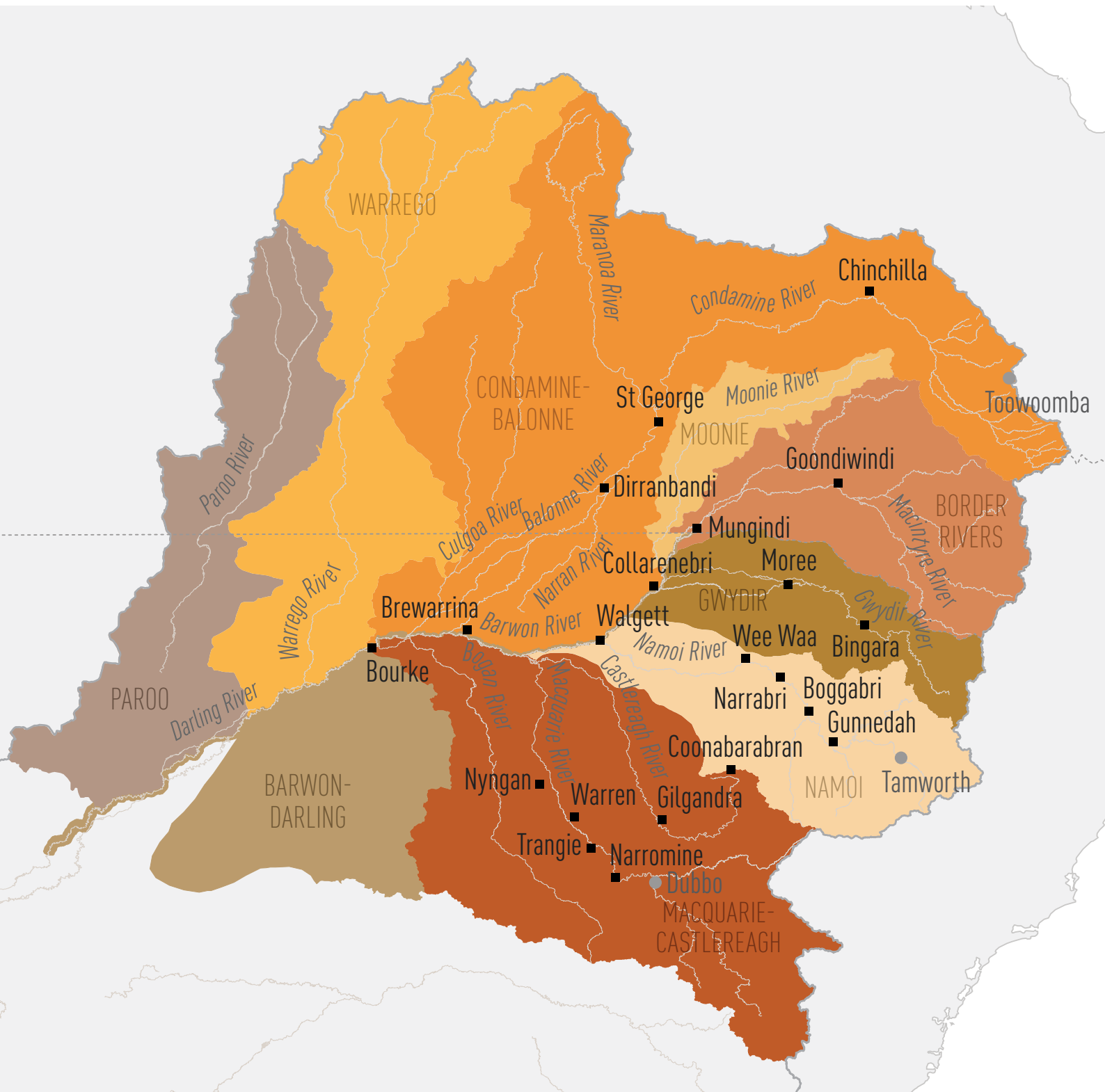
At the time the Basin Plan was established, the MDBA recognised more work in the north was needed to improve understanding of the hydrology, environment and socio-economic implications of the Basin Plan settings. A commitment was made, supported by all basin governments, to undertake a review and assess whether Basin Plan settings in the north are appropriate.

Basin Plan amendments

Northern Basin Review

Snapshot

- The Basin Plan seeks to deliver vibrant communities, productive industries and healthy rivers. It does this by establishing a framework for consistent and integrated water management across the Murray–Darling Basin. The Basin Plan sets the amount of water which can be taken in future from the basin’s surface water and groundwater resources (sustainable diversion limits – SDL).
- A review of the northern basin water recovery target has been completed by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). The need to review the target was identified in 2012 when the Basin Plan was passed in recognition that knowledge of some northern areas was not as well developed as others. The three year review involved substantial new research into socio-economic, hydrology and environmental aspects of the northern basin. It also included consultation with northern basin communities.
- An 11 member Northern Basin Advisory Committee was established comprising of people from places in the northern basin with industry, community, Aboriginal and environmental expertise. This group, along with substantial feedback from people within communities, has been invaluable during the review and has advised on the research and helped ground truth the findings. The Northern Basin Advisory Committee also identified the opportunity to implement a range of actions (such as the protection of environmental flows and temporary trade) as a means of reducing economic impacts but delivering environmental outcomes.
- The Basin Plan current recovery target for the northern basin is 390 gegalitres (GL) of water. This target is made up of 247 GL within local catchments and 143 GL to be found from across the northern basin, called shared reductions.
- Based on research and feedback from communities, the MDBA is proposing the water recovery target be reduced from 390 GLs to 320 GLs, provided there are commitments from Australia, Queensland and New South Wales governments to implement a range of measures aimed at improving water management in the north.
- This reduction minimises socio-economic impacts in northern basin communities and delivers almost equivalent environmental outcomes by taking a more targeted approach to water recovery.
- The socio-economic research shows how communities have already been affected by water recovery in the north. The proposed change should reduce further impacts in many northern basin communities but some communities will feel further effects, especially in the Lower–Balonne. The MDBA recommends governments consider priority assistance for communities to help them adjust to the proposed changes, especially Dirranbandi and Warren.
- The MDBA further recommends governments and communities find ways to improve access to waterways for Aboriginal people and improve engagement in water planning and management.
- The proposed amendments to the Basin Plan are open for public comment from 22 November 2016 to 24 February 2017. Members of the public are encouraged to learn about the proposal and make a submission.
- More information on the review and submission process can be found on the MDBA website.



Map of the northern Murray-Darling Basin catchments

■ Locations included in Northern Basin Review

Basin Plan amendments

Northern Basin Review

Proposed changes to the Basin Plan

The MDBA proposes changing the total water recovery in the northern basin from 390 GL to 320 GL on the basis governments commit to implementing certain measures aimed at improving water management. This means more water will be available for industries and communities.

It is also proposed to change the way water is recovered by reducing the shared reduction amount and increasing local reduction targets in some areas. For some catchments this will see water recovery targets increase, while others will remain the same.

Proposed change to northern basin water recovery target



What this means for your catchment area

The breakdown of what changes are proposed for each catchment area is listed in the following table:

State	Catchment area	Current local recovery targets (GL/y)	Current assumed shared recovery (GL/y)	Proposed local recovery targets (GL/y)	Assumed shared recovery* (GL/y)
QLD	Paroo	0	0	0	0
	Warrego	8	0	8	0
	Nebine	1	0	1	0
	Moonie	0	2	0	2
	Condamine-Balonne	100	42	100	0
	Queensland Border Rivers	8	15	14	15
	Queensland total recovery	117	59	123	17
NSW	Intersecting Streams	0	8	0	8
	Gwydir	42	14	42	0
	NSW Border Rivers	7	9	7	0
	Namoi	10	14	20	0
	Macquarie-Castlereagh	65	18	55	16
	Barwon-Darling Watercourse	6	22	32	0
	NSW total recovery	130	85	156	24
Local and shared subtotals		247	+	143	
Northern basin total water recovery		= 390		= 320	

*The New South Wales and Queensland governments may determine the distribution of the shared reduction amount, otherwise a default arrangement will apply.

Why the shared reduction target has changed

The northern basin is a connected system, with some catchments more connected than others. Local recovery in any catchment can provide benefits for the catchments below it, and the overall health of the system. The shared reduction is the volume required in addition to the local reduction in each catchment to meet environmental outcomes at the bottom of the system in the Barwon–Darling.

The new environmental science and hydrological modelling shows Barwon–Darling environmental outcomes are best achieved by recovering water within the catchment itself, which is why the Authority has proposed to increase the local recovery target in the Barwon–Darling to 32 GL. This volume recognises both recovery-to-date, and the negative social and economic effects of a larger water recovery amount.

Well-connected tributaries also contribute to flows in the Barwon–Darling, specifically the contributions of the Macquarie and the Border Rivers to baseflows, and in wet years the contributions of the Condamine–Balonne and the Namoi to peak flows.

To further improve environmental outcomes in the Barwon–Darling, targeted recovery combined with management and protection of environmental flows, would make the most of recovered water.

On this basis, the Authority is proposing that the shared reduction be reduced from 143 GLs to 41 GLs.

For the environmental science aspects of the review we looked in more detail at three areas, the Lower-Balonne, Narran Lakes and the Barwon–Darling.

These areas were selected because of their high ecological value and they act to represent the needs of the broader area. A key assumption is — if the needs of these downstream areas are met, there will be benefits for upstream regions as water flows through the system.

Any decisions to sell water that has been over-recovered will be a decision for the Commonwealth

Environmental Water Office and the relevant basin state governments, if the proposed amendments are adopted.

Implications for the southern basin

Northern Basin Review modelling shows that, as a long-term average, around 45% of water recovered from the northern basin reaches Menindee Lakes. However, this value is dependent on both the location and type of water entitlement recovered and the pattern in which it is used.

Compared to the existing water recovery target of 390 GLs, the proposed 320 GLs option represents a more efficient pattern of water recovery and use. A more targeted recovery strategy includes recovery of water from tributaries with connections that allow for different flows to be restored in the Barwon–Darling system.

The reduction in the water recovery of 70 GLs results in 7 GLs less flows reaching Menindee Lakes. This translates to a 4 GLs reduction in flows to South Australia, and a 3 GLs reduction in barrage flow, compared to the benchmark. The Authority did not consider this reduction to have a material impact on achieving Basin Plan outcomes.

Further, the SDL adjustment mechanism is operating in the southern-connected basin to determine whether there will be a change to the recovery volume in the south. The outcomes of the Northern Basin Review will not alter the way the mechanism operates, but will be used to establish a new modelling benchmark from which adjustments are calculated.

Key terms

Sustainable diversion limits — limit the amount of water that can be used for consumptive purposes in the basin.

Local reduction amount — the amount of water that is required to be recovered in each catchment to satisfy local environmental needs.

Shared reduction amount — further reduction required, in addition to the local reduction amounts, to satisfy the environmental needs of the northern basin.

Basin Plan amendments

Northern Basin Review

Economy

Short and long term economic implications of water recovery

Social

Community needs and influence of water on well-being

Murray–Darling Basin northern water recovery target considered:

Environment

Effects of water recovery and other approaches that can influence environmental health

The MDBA's decision-making process

The *Water Act 2007* and the Basin Plan require the basin's water resources to be managed in a way that considers outcomes for all water users. In forming the proposed amendment the MDBA was tasked with making what is referred to as a triple-bottom line decision, considering the needs of industries, communities and the environment.

A three-year research program was undertaken to better understand these needs. A considerable volume of new information was developed that added to the existing stock of knowledge. Over this time the MDBA closely reviewed the extensive results across the economic, social and environmental areas.

Assessing this research and coming to a recommendation are the six member Authority, who draw on a breadth of expertise and experience in water, economics, the environment, natural resource management and agriculture. These members have weighed up the research, feedback from communities, industries and key representative groups as well as the implications for the economic, social and environmental outcomes (see Triple Bottom Line report).

Communities (Social)

The MDBA has listened to people and has a good understanding of how communities respond to water recovery. The research covered how 21 northern basin communities respond to water recovery and its effects.

The MDBA has used what we've heard, together with our detailed analysis of economies and the environment to understand what supports communities. We held almost 30 community meetings across 2016 to share our research, ground truth our findings and to gain a holistic approach to concerns in the north.

The MDBA also identified a number of measures that could address some of the serious concerns of Aboriginal people and their connection to country and rivers. The measures have emerged through our discussions and work with the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations and consist of a number of initiatives, including increased access to waterways and improving engagement of Aboriginal people in water planning.



Industries (Economy)

This recommendation offers better social and economic outcomes for irrigation communities compared with the current Basin Plan settings. For many irrigation communities no further water needs to be recovered. Communities told us that other things would help the health of the river as well as recovering water. The use of other measures, together with water recovery, will keep further impacts to a minimum.

The recommendation means different things for different communities. Ultimately, the reduction in water recovery needed means that in most of the studied 21 northern basin communities the economic effects are relatively small. In many cases, the effects are much smaller than those caused by other contributing factors. However, we recognise that any job losses in regional Australia has an impact on its communities.

Environment

Even under the current Basin Plan settings we can't return the northern basin rivers to full health.

We can't do quite as much with less water. Under 320 GL recovery, the environmental outcomes are slightly reduced compared to the current target in the Basin Plan.

We all need to be smarter with how we manage water. This is why our recommended approach includes other measures in addition to water recovery to help achieve river health with less water.

What we have learnt through this process is that different river flows at different times can achieve better results for the environment. It's about maximising these flows.

The information we have will guide future water recovery strategy, both in terms of what we recover, where and how.

More information

Underpinning this proposed Basin Plan amendment is substantial background research and materials from the Northern Basin Review. These can be found on the MDBA website mdba.gov.au and include:

- legal materials outline proposed amendments
- research summaries, and
- technical research reports and any relevant peer reviews.

You can also contact us on 1800 230 067 or by email engagement@mdba.gov.au and we will do our best to answer your questions. The website will be regularly updated with frequently asked questions. There will also be some town information sessions in northern basin communities. Details can be found on the MDBA website.

Next steps

The *Water Act 2007* requires that any changes the MDBA proposes to the Basin Plan requires a minimum eight week public consultation. The MDBA invites submissions from interested parties to provide feedback or to support the proposed changes to the Basin Plan.

Formal submissions can be received up until **5pm (AEST) 24 February 2017.**

To make a submission visit our website
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or post a submission to:

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Murray–Darling Basin Authority
GPO BOX 2256
CANBERRA ACT 2601

After all submissions are received, they will be reviewed and a report will be drafted. The MDBA will finalise any proposed amendments and make a recommendation to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

Once the Minister makes a decision the amendments will be tabled in parliament.

Images: Irene Dowdy

Front cover: Agronomist with Farmer, St George QLD
Pages 6 & 7 (L to R): Street scene, Mungbean crop and farmer,
Balonne River, St George QLD





6 October 2016

Kelvin Goldstone
Secretary
Region 5, Murray Darling Association
PO Box 28
MANNUM SA 5238



Appendix 6.8

Dear Kelvin,

Re: EOI to host 2017 Murray Darling Association National Conference and AGM

It is with pleasure that Renmark Paringa Council submit a formal EOI of interest to host the 2017 Murray Darling Association National Conference, AGM and study tour.

Renmark in spring is a wonderful place with the roses in full bloom, magnificent manicured lawns and warm days. We'd love for your delegates to see what Renmark has to offer!

Importantly, Renmark is also a hub for environmental activity with an internationally recognised RAMSAR wetlands site, significant salt interception programs, extensive improvements in water regulation and fishways and the location of the McCormick Centre for the Environment.

Please find attached a 2 page summary outlining what Renmark has to offer and why it would be the ideal location in Region 5 to host this event.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Adrian Pipe, Manager of Community Services on (08) 8580 3000 / apipe@renmarkparinga.sa.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Tony Siviour
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



2017 Murray Darling Association National Conference, AGM and study tour.

Renmark (meaning “red mud” as it was called by the First Peoples of the region) is ideally situated on the banks of the River Murray and close to the borders of Victorian and New South Wales. It is also home to the internationally significant Riverland Ramsar site and other significant environment / riverine areas including Pike Creek, Chowilla and Lyrup Flats National Park.

As the first irrigated colony in Australia (1887), Renmark has almost 130 years of history as a primary production area as well as one of South Australia’s premier tourism destinations and home to a large fleet of houseboats. The locks and weirs system help ensure that Renmark can maintain a good pool level making it popular with recreational water users.

The river is the lifeblood of our community, so much so that in June 2016, the Council changed it’s logo / branding to capture the ochre of the earth (“red mud”) and the blue of the river running through our district.

Renmark is also home to the McCormick Centre for the Environment - a purpose-built environmentally sustainable development showcase facility. The Centre is universally recognised as the environmental hub for the Riverland region and is home to the Murray Darling Basin interpretive / interactive model. The Centre has a small wetland that is used for educational and research purposes is also the virtual and physical location of the Murray and Mallee Regional Science Hub. The venue would make an ideal location for the Civic Reception

Renmark and the broader Riverland region have, for many years, been promoted as a best practice area for water efficiency. These efficiencies have been borne from many factors including concerns around water security and the associated high costs of water in peak demand periods but more importantly, a genuine commitment from farmers, irrigators and businesses that water is a precision commodity that needs to be well managed. It has also come about from an understanding and acceptance that water is required for tourism, maintaining parks and gardens, environmental flows and watering, plants and animals and for recreational users. Everyone has a stake or interest in preserving a healthy river system.

The Renmark Paringa district is unique in that it was the first irrigated colony in Australia with the Chaffey Brothers creating opportunities for irrigated horticulture. The region has a long and proud history of primary production including wine grapes (the largest producing region in Australia by volume), citrus (particularly oranges), stone fruit, almonds, avocados and olives.

The district is also home to one of the largest fleets of houseboats in the State and a healthy river system is imperative to these and other tourism-based businesses. In recent years, there has been a rapid rise in eco-friendly tourism and accommodation alternatives in the district and again, these businesses rely on the river and the natural environment for their survival. In particular, Renmark is home to the Murray River Walk, a walk that has recently be included as one of the Great Walks of Australia – Australia’s most inspiring walking holidays. The walk starts at the McCormick Centre for the Environment.



As noted on the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources website (www.environment.sa.gov.au), The Riverland Ramsar site "is located in a semi arid environment which absolutely dependent on the River Murray, it's backwaters and tributaries. The wetlands are part of the large Murray Darling Basin and consist of a variety of wetland types including channels, anabranches, billabongs, floodplains, swamps and lakes in semi-natural condition".

Renmark Paringa Council is also a founding member of the Murray and Mallee Regional Science Hub. The Science Hub has been created through funds providing by Inspiring SA to generate interest in Science, Technology, Environment and Mathematics. The Council works closely with DEWNR to support relevant projects and the promotion of National Science Week activities. In 2016, the focus of Science Week was on emerging technologies with several sessions looking at the use of drones for water testing / sampling, the application of 3D / laser mapping to better understand water use and improve watering efficiency.

The township of Renmark has sufficient accommodation to house all Conference delegates and is easily accessible via road from Adelaide or Mildura. The town also boasts a 450 seat Theatre / auditorium as well as break out spaces if required. With a facility of this capacity, parking is not an issue.

Key Government Agencies (State and Federal) are located less than 20 kilometers away allowing easy access to support the Conference through attendance, presentations and/or display booths. As mentioned previously, the McCormick Centre for the Environment is only 3 kms from the centre of town and could be utilised to host the Civic Reception. It also has a 114 seat Auditorium where sessions could also be held.

Renmark is also ideally suited to facilitate a diverse study tour opportunity(ies). These include;

- Chowilla Station / Ramsar Wetlands – Experience Australia's outback, history, scenery, wild life, Murray River and pastoral industry at one of Australia's oldest and historic sheep stations nestled among an internationally listed RAMSAR wetland. On coach talk followed by a tour
- Tour of the McCormick Centre – including wetlands
- Lock 5 – Built during the 1920's to regulate the flow and the levels of the Murray River. Speaker on how the Lock was installed
- PS Industry – possible opportunity for steaming tour
- New Fishway at Bert Bix Park
- Pike Creek and Salt Interception Project
- Calperum Station – demonstration of re-vegetation and landscape renewal

Renmark has a large bus / coach tour company that can accommodate all study tour participants.

The application from Renmark Paringa Council to host the 2017 Murray Darling Association National Conference, AGM and study tour has the support of the Region 5 Councils.

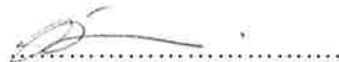
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I wish to acknowledge that at the Murray Darling Association Region 5 meeting at Waikerie on Monday 10 October 2016, in response to a question that I asked Peter Smith and his response, I did respond that "Peter Smith was a disgrace".

It is highlighted that this was the first time since the Commemoration Service of Vietnam Veterans Day in August 2016, in Mannum, when Mr Smith inappropriately raised Council business with me at such Service. I was responding to this last occasion.

However, I recognise that I should not have made these comments at the Murray Darling Association Region 5 meeting and apologise.

It would be appreciated if this apology could be placed in the minutes of the Region 5 Murray Darling Association meeting.



Councillor Peter Raison
23 February 2017