



Murray Darling Association Inc.

Ordinary Meeting of Region 6
12 November 2021
09:00 am – 12:30 pm
Rural City of Murray Bridge
Town Hall (upstairs)
13-17 Bridge St Murray Bridge, SA 5253
Or

[Join meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 863 9905 6559, Passcode: 720894
One tap mobile: +61370182005, 86399056559#, *720894# Australia

MINUTES – November 2021

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1. **WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY** – Mayor Lewis provided an Acknowledgement of Country from a RCMB perspective.
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2. **ATTENDANCE**

2.1. Present

Cr Melissa Rebbeck (Chair)	Alexandrina Council
Cr Michael Scott ASM OAM	Alexandrina Council
Mayor Brenton Lewis	Rural City of Murray Bridge
GM Heather Barclay	Rural City of Murray Bridge
Stephen Packer	Rural City of Murray Bridge
Cr Vern Leng	Coorong District Council
Cr Brenton Qualman	Coorong District Council
Warren Jacobs	Individual member (online)
Colin Grundy	Individual member (online)

2.2. Guests

Cr Perter Smith OAM	Mid Murray Council
Nathan Bicknell	Coordinator MDA Region 6
Deana Mildren	MDBA
Richard Mintern	CEWO
Greg Burns	OIGWC

2.3. Apologies

CEO Glenn Rappensberg	Alexandrina
CEO Bridget Mather	Coorong District Council
Cr Merlyn Henderson	City of Victor Harbor

2.4. Declarations
Nil

3. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Motion: that the minutes of the Murray Darling Association (MDA) Region 6 - Ordinary Meeting held 20 August 2021 be approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

Cr Vern Leng/Cr Qualmann/Carried

4. REPORTS

4.1. Chair – Cr Melissa Rebbeck

The Chair's Regional report to the MDA Board Meeting ([appendix 1](#)) was taken as read. In addition the Chair raised the following points:

- Thanked the member councils and staff for putting together a successful Symposium (the symposium),
- That the outcomes and discussion of the symposium (dinner and field trip) will help inform the Strategic Direction, Work Plan and Motions of Region 6 moving forward;
- That the video and stills collated on the field-trip will be used to make a short film showcasing the region;
- That funding support (\$4k) will be sort, including from member councils; and
- That the executive recommend preparing a bid for the region to host the 2023 National MDA Conference.

4.2. MDA CEO – Emma Bradbury

The CEO thanked Region 6 for having her today and congratulated the working group on hosting an excellent Symposium, noting that the board members also valued the opportunity to participate.

The detailed CEO's Report as tabled ([appendix 2](#)) was taken as read. The CEO highlight the following points:

- Bids for the National Conference would be due, mid July 2023;
- Highlights from the recent MDBA, "Peaks Briefing"; and
- The recruitment process for the CEO position is complete and the successful candidate expected to be announced soon.

Question: Will there be a hand over period and where will the new CEO be based?

Answer: There will be a one-week hand-over and a month where I will be available to walk them through the basin issues. The new CEO will be based in Albury NSW.

Motion: that the Region 6 extend our vote of confidence and support for the work and leadership of Emma as outgoing CEO of MDA, in particular raising the capacity and cohesiveness of the Board and the Association.

Cr Scott/Cr Rebbeck/Carried

4.3. Strategic Planning Group (MDA):

Mayor Lewis noted that he was an apology for the last meeting of the MDA's Strategic Planning Working Group.

Comment: Emma noted that said meeting resolved to hold MDA's next strategic planning workshop in Canberra - February 2022. Which will provide an opportunity to introduce the new CEO to the board members, Departmental staff and politicians.

4.4. Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA):

Senior Engagement Officer - Deana Mildren spoke to the MDBA report ([appendix 3](#)):

Discussion:

- Water in Stowage – 90% full across the whole of Basin;
- Medindie Lakes – Surcharged at 111%;
- Hume Dam update; releases had ceased but recent rain saw a resumption;
- Managing sediment in the Barmah – Millewa "choke";
- MDBA Webinars; Allocations saw all States present to over 300 participants; and

- Community Science Forums (Lower Murray).

Comment: Emma noted that, following the recent MDBA consultation on managing sediment at Barmah- Millewa. The MDA have sort clarity on apparent inconsistencies between the MDA’s reports [on the Choke].

Action: that the coordinator liaise with Deana regarding distribution of links to the relevant reports and webinar and arrange for Ben Dyer to present to the committee on the Choke issue.

4.5. Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO):
Local Engagement Officer Richard Mintern,

Discussion:

- Combining of commonwealths websites (www.awe.gov.au);
- E-water holdings and stowage;
- E-watering Plan for the year; which accounts for a range of scenarios (dry to wet);
- In a wet year CEWO hope to extend or promote watering of the upper flood plain communities (e.g. Black box);
- Menindee Lakes are surcharged with releases now occurring down the Great Darling-Baaka Anabranh, a first since 2016., which will support recruitment of Golden and Silver Perch to the Murray System; and
- A revision of the Torrumbarry Weir (Goulburn-Murray) maximum flow rule allowed water to reach the Kerang Lakes.

Comment: the Chair took the opportunity to thank Richard for his report and for his contribution to the Symposium.

4.6. Office of Inspector-General Water Compliance (IGWC):
Field Officer – Greg Burns of Loxton, took the opportunity to introduce the role and objectives of the OIGWC.

- Responsibility split from the Authority;
- Oversight and compliance;
- Improve trust and Transparency; and
- Regulate the Regulators;
- Reviews and reports upcoming

Question: What advertising have the IGWC undertaken to raise awareness?

Answer: Most of the advertising has been focused upon agricultural publications channels on the eastern states.

Question: What teeth does the office have?

Answer: Under the Act the IGWC has the same powers as an ICAC that is to enter, seize, and compel witnesses.

Question: Do we report water compliance issues to you directly?

Answer: Issues must first go to the relevant State departments if they are not followed up satisfactory they can be escalated to the IGWC.

Action: the coordinator to circulate Mr Burns contact details to the members.

4.7. Member’s Updates (written or verbal)

4.7.1. Mayor Lewis (RCMB)

- Landscape SA Allocations for the water year; and
- Changes to the way ELMA water is calculated; has resulted in some redistributions (winners and losers).

4.7.2. Colin Grundy (individual member)

- Water levels of the Lower Lakes are very high;
- The water seems quite dirty;
- Promoting the growth of water ;
- The swans have had three laying events;
- The Fishways in the barrages are working well; and

- Cape Barron Geese are back.

Comment: The Chair took the opportunity to thank Colin for his excellent contribution to the Symposium Field trip.

4.7.3. Warren Jacobs

- Also attended the MDBA's Peaks Briefing; key issues:
- 450GL recovery doesn't look likely,
- Any further recovery will not be off-farm only,
- Review of the Basin Plan in 2024
- Carry over rules in SA (technical releases)
- Primary Produces SA (PPSA) have a new Chair and CEO
- Attended the MDBA's Community Science forum (Lower Murray)

4.7.4. Cr Vern Leng

- Recent News article about fish recovery in the Coorong;
- Member of PIRSA Fisheries Management Advisory Committee – Coorong Lower Lakes;
- Recovery Plans for Black Bream and Green Back Flounder;
- Closure on Black Bream Breeding period (August – Dec); and
- Until this year, the lack of flow is unable to support conditions required for successful recruitment (salt wedge).

Action: that SARDI be added to the agenda list to provide and update on fish monitoring work.

4.7.5. Cr Michael Scott ASM OAM

- That the community have noticed the high river and Lower Lakes; and
- These topical events provide an opportunity to educate the public (editorials etc.)

Motion: that the members receive the reports and updates.

Cr Michael Scott/Cr Vern Leng/Carried

11:00 Morning tea: Guests: Deana Mildren and Cr Pete Smith OAM– depart

5. CORRESPONDENCE

The members noted the correspondence in and out as tabled.

Discussion: Nil

6. BUSINESS ARISING

The members reviewed the MDA-R6 matters in progress from the previous Ordinary meetings as tabled.

Discussion: Nil.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1. Code of Conduct

Comment: the Chair took the opportunity to remind members and guests that MDA Regional Committee meetings operate under the MDA's: [Meeting Procedure - Standing Orders](#) and members must comply with the [Murray Darling Association Members Code of Conduct](#). Which allows for guests to attend the meeting as observers and to contribute when invited to do so.

Motion: that the committee write to Cr Peter Smith OAM (Mid Murray) expressing disappointment regarding his conduct unbecoming and to remind him of his responsibilities as a guest of MDA Region 6.

Mayor Brenton Lewis/Cr Brenton Qualmann/Carried

Action: the coordinator to draft a letter to Cr Peter Smith OAM for the Chair's approval.

8. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & WORK PLAN

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

8.1. Symposium Working Group Update

The overview of the Symposium as tabled was taken as read.

Comment: the Chair took the opportunity to thank the working group, the project team and members councils for all their hard work in organising and running the event.

8.2. Review

Strategic Directions and Work Plan (2020) to be reviewed following the Symposium:

In addition to the key issues raised by the Symposium, the Chair canvassed the members present regarding topics for motions to the National Conference in Albury, September 2022.

Discussion:

- Members provided their suggestion for motion topics which were recorded on the white board; and
- Motions will need to be endorsed by member councils prior to going into "caretaker-mode" prior to LGA elections.

Actions: that the coordinator to work with the Chair to refine the list of possible motions, prior to circulation and assignment to members.

8.3. Calendar of Meetings and Events.

Discussion:

- Regarding the appetite to hold another Motions Workshop in the new year; and
- The MDA is facilitating a meeting of SA regional Chairs – 15 November 2021 to plan the interregional meeting.

Action: that the coordinator to canvases the members regarding a motions workshop in the New Year.

9. NEXT MEETING

- Ordinary meeting and AGM - 25 February 2021, Goolwa, Alexandrina Council (TBC):
- AGM: 09:00 am - 10:00 am
- Ordinary Meeting: 10:00 - 13:00 pm.

9.1. Agenda Items

Discussion: suggestions by the members to add to the list;

- Barmah- Millewa Choke;
- Refinement of Region 6 Motions to MDA AGM; and
- Fish of the Lakes and Coorong.

9.2. Guest Speakers

Discussion: suggestions by the members to add to the list:

- Matt Dyer - Director, System Review, MDBA
- Dr Qifeng Ye, Inland Waters & Catchment Ecology, SARDI Aquatic Science
- Dr Scotte Wedderburn, Small Bodied Fish, The University of Adelaide.

10. CLOSE

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks to the Rural City of Murray Bridge for its support in hosting this Ordinary meeting and video conference of MDA Region 6.
