



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

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## Region 4 Ordinary Meeting

Tuesday 10 March 2020 – 1:00pm EST

Venue: The Midway Centre, 6 Midway Drive, Buronga, NSW

## MINUTES

### 1. ATTENDANCE

In Person	By Teleconference
Cr Jane MacAllister (Wentworth Shire Council)	Darrea Turley (Broken Hill)
Cr Jason Modica (Mildura Rural City Council)	Marion Browne (Broken Hill)
Cr Steve Heywood (Wentworth Shire Council)	
Greg Hill (Central Darling Shire Council)	
Richard Mintern (CEWH)	
Mike Colreavy (Balranald Council)	
Gavin Helgeland (Balranald Council)	

### 2. APOLOGIES

Ken Ross, Cr Tim Elstone

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

### 4. WELCOME

Cr MacAllister

### 5. MINUTES

#### Resolution

That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 January 2020 be accepted.

**Moved:** Cr Jason Modica

**Seconded:** Cr Steve Heywood

**CARRIED**

### 6. BUSINESS ARISING

Cubby Station can hold 1.3M megs only 10% goes past – through MDBA allowed first 10% of first flush to go past - makes a mockery of the whole plan. How is that mimicked through the whole northern basin?

### 7. REPORTS

The following verbal reports to be provided:

#### 7.1 Chairman's Report – Cr MacAllister

Cr MacAllister has taken a job with Nature Conservation Council of NSW River campaign organizer

Cr MacAllister, Rachel Strachan, Barbara Quayle, Greg Hill - SDL projects Water Sharing Plan

Block banks will need to be removed

Meetings of Councils along river advocating embargoes, Bourke Council backflipped – also DPIE has allowed pumping between Bourke & Wilcannia since Friday 6 March 2020. Exemptions on embargoes for A, B & C licences.

Bores at Pooncarie are working but bores at Wilcannia & Menindee have poor water quality

## 7.2 Council Reports – each Council to provide a verbal update of activities from their region

Central Darling Shire– Flows to Wilcannia last Thursday, 10800MG per day rising at 300-400mm per day. EC 4000 on Friday, water quality was very poor, now EC 0. Water at Viewmont yesterday possibility 300 Gig – Wilcannia weir construction RFQ in May view to start construction in September and completion in December

Balranald Shire Council – Yanga Lake project information to be sent through– river flow last year went below minimum – intervalley trade allowed a better flow this year Murrumbidgee – intervalley trading – good for blue green algae, water quality, issues for Murrumbidgee has got Locks regulators and the last lock is unregulated upside-down river. Balranald cannot operate weir as it is unsafe. 90% carp at Balranald – black water events – fish kills – Isolated weir pool full of carp. Lake Yanga is dry. Lake Yanga was a great breeding event but it doesn't connect back to Murrumbidgee. The point is if you could increase the weir pool by 1.5m would reconnect back to Yanga Lake, it is a protectorate for the environment. Project \$4M but told it was small.

Need science, hydrological data, scientific data into the argument.

Gavin will send details of project to Jane to get to the MDA strategic planning meeting.

Mildura Regional City Council – Presented to RC in SA, Productivity commission, MRCC have a water policy currently on public display, trying to understand how much development we can have

Wentworth Shire Council – lobbying to Minister Pavey to keep embargoes in place – Minister to review her own Department

## 7.3 Water Meetings Attended

# 8. GENERAL BUSINESS

## 8.1 Richard Mintern, Local Engagement Officer with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

CEWO has responsibility of managing Commonwealth water to keep wetlands and environmental bodies watered. Mid nineties, quadrupled amount of water they held. Bi-partisan & state support for environmental initiatives and opening up open trading of water. Statutory body - Jodie Swick in Mildura next Thursday. Sit under Environment Minister not Water Minister separate but work closely with MDBA. Manage water but not the land. Drought scenario trying to maintain some resilience in the system. When conditions get back to normal wetlands are usually still in drought. Local Councils writing position papers on water. Look forward to NSW government agencies producing water sharing plans by July.

Greg & Jane currently reviewing Menindee Lakes Water SDL plans – environmental water is acquired irrigation licences 80 different licence types across whole basin follow state rules in which ever state licenced in – having environmental water outside the irrigation pool – some states have specific environmental water (small volumes). CEWO is not a decision maker in that space.

Should we be asking for more water in the MLWSDL, is the environmental water held in the SDL plan.

Rule changes coming back, give better tools, the amount of water in Menindee Lakes is small, high security but small volume.

Interestingly VIC is trying to get water on floodplains and keep it there, NSW Government is doing the opposite in NSW eg Menindee Lakes

Does the CEWO hold environmental water in Menindee? Can come down the Darling? Yes have to put in an order with River Ops at SA Border.

250G may hit Wetherall, should be enough for a flush to Lower Darling sending 2000mg per day down the river.

Does the CWEO have an understanding of how much more that flow would have been if the embargoes were left in place? Not really they concentrate on what water they have.

## 8.2 Strategic Planning MDA Region 4

- 8.1.1 For discussion - 70 GL of up water returned to Horticultural and Agriculture two years ago by the Senate? Could we find out the cost to River Health, native fish health & community health? How can a small group of lobbyists can turn a Nations Senate with no scientific evidence-based information?
- 8.1.2 For discussion - the capacity of horticultural businesses like Cubbie Station (all other over extractors need to be addressed too) and their ability to extract water during large rainfall periods and how that extraction puts pressure on downstream communities. How sustainable is this and can we have it addressed by State and Federal Governments and the MDBA? While identifying the conflicted voice of lobbyists.
- 8.1.3 CSIRO/Universities partnership opportunities – looking at finalising MOU with CSIRO – how can they support the questions regions have – evaporation data northern basin / Menindee Lakes
- 8.1.4 Yanga Lake project
- 8.1.5 Value of the water cycle/evaporation and replenishing the aquifers
- 8.3 MDA Letter to Minister Pavey re: Approval to take (Attachment 2)  
For information
- 8.4 Climate ready communities (Attachment 3)  
Councils to forward climate statements if they have one. If not have a look at the document and make comment. Send through to Chair at [gmea@wentworth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gmea@wentworth.nsw.gov.au)
- 8.5 Climate Ready Regions Conference (Attachment 4)  
For information if anyone would like to attend
- 8.6 Phillip Glyde Opinion piece (Attachment 5)  
For information
- 8.7 Water Allocation Statement dated 2 March 2020 (Attachment 6)  
For information
- 8.8 Extension of embargoes & exemptions (Attachment 7)  
For information
- 8.9 Murray-Darling Basin Baseline Diversion Limits - estimate for 2019-2020 water year (Attachment 8)  
For information
- 8.10 Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Diversion Limits - estimate for 2019-2020 water year (Attachment 9)  
For information
- 8.11 MDA National Conference 22-24 July at Shepparton motions to Chair prior to next meeting.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Proposed 9 June 2020 at 1pm**

**10. CLOSE 3.02pm**

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