



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Region 4 Ordinary Meeting

Tuesday 2 March 2021 – 1:00pm EDT

Venue: The Midway Centre, 6 Midway Drive, Buronga, NSW or
Via Video Conference

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE

Meeting opened at 1pm

In Person	
Cr Sue Nichols (Wentworth Shire Council)	Mike Colreavy (Balranald Shire Council)
Cr Steve Heywood (Wentworth Shire Council)	Gavin Helgeland (Balranald Shire Council)
Cr Tim Elstone (Wentworth Shire Council)	Oliver McNulty (Balranald Shire Council)
Cr Jodi Reynolds (Mildura Rural City Council)	Greg Hill (Central Darling Shire Council)
Cr Jason Modica (Mildura Rural City Council)	Emma Bradbury
Cr Darriea Turley (Broken Hill City Council)	Gayle Marsden (Wentworth Shire Council)
Ken Ross (Wentworth Shire Council)	

2. APOLOGIES

Cr Jane MacAllister (WSC), Cr Browne (BHCC), Bob Stewart (CDSC), Jay Nankelvil

Motion

That the apologies listed be accepted.

Moved: Cr Elstone

Seconded: Cr Modica

CARRIED

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES – Ordinary Meeting 8 December 2021

Motion

That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2020 be confirmed as circulated.

Moved: Cr Heywood

Seconded: Cr Elstone

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING

Representatives from Broken Hill, Central Darling & Wentworth Councils attended the Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW. Cr Elstone attempted to bring up the 500GL cap, which they are now trying to extend to 1400GL, and was shut down as it wasn't within the terms of reference

Region 4 call on MDA to advocate to restore the 500GL cap for licencing and strongly opposes the current proposed legislation for floodplain harvesting.

5. REPORTS

The following verbal reports to be provided:

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

Wentworth – Information from Cr MacAllister

On Friday afternoon, this regulation was gazetted "Water Management (General) Amendment (Emergency Works Exemption) Regulation

2021" https://gazette.legislation.nsw.gov.au/so/download.w3p?id=Regulation_2021_2021-81.pdf

This morning, the "Water Management (General) Amendment (Miscellaneous) Regulation 2021" was gazetted <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/sl-2021-91>

As rain is forecast in the northern basin, it is particularly concerning to note the lack of consultation or publicity about these amendments.

Mildura – Cr Modica thanked everyone for his 31/2 years on the MDA and introduced Cr Reynolds as the new MDA representative for the Mildura Rural City Council.

Cr Modica's information

1. A recent private ruling made by the Australian Tax Office has revealed foreign residents are exempt from capital gains tax on water profits. It is quite possible therefore, that when Angus Taylor's Cayman Islands associates won their record \$80m windfall from selling water rights, they incurred no capital gains tax. The Tax Office ruling confirms what many farmers have known for years, that large, often foreign-owned, agribusinesses enjoy significant advantages over Australian farming families; not only because of their sheer size, and access to cheaper capital, but also tax.
2. What is being done to ensure the health of all rivers in the Murray Darling? The ongoing issue of Blue Green Alae seems even more pronounced this year.
3. How did the NSW Government introduce new laws last week allowing irrigators unlimited extraction during high flood levels? (See Cr MacAllister's information above) There was no debate in parliament and there seems to be little acknowledgment of the end of system flows required for healthy rivers systems in the country. The lower Darling and Menindee lakes are reliant on these end of system flows and high volume floods to maintain any water. Victorian irrigators also benefit from higher percentage allocations from a connected Darling River.

4. Land and water, the big corporate buy-up

Australian farming is being increasingly corporatised:

- The ATO's report into foreign ownership of agricultural land shows that, as of June 2019, almost 14% of all agricultural land is held by foreigners.
- The Register of Foreign Ownership of Water Entitlements shows that as of 2018 10.4 percent, or 4035GL, of Australia's water entitlements have some degree of foreign ownership.
- Of foreign investors in Australian water entitlements, China and the US are the biggest, sitting at roughly 2% each, followed by UK investors at 1.1 percent.
- In 2019, there were 89,000 agricultural businesses across Australia, down 34 percent from 2010

Balranald - Gavin

Balranald connectivity of Lake Yanga & the Murrumbidgee river update as follows:

Engaging with State Officers DPIE Water NSW, interdepartmental TOR for a scoping study. Thank you to the MDA for their advocacy.

NSW Water Strategy Murrumbidgee/Murray – timeframe feels like a tick and flick, unclear what outcomes we will get, they don't link with anything, not legislated and quite meaningless.

Central Darling Shire Council

With the recent decline in the Menindee Weir Pool Council have secured funding for water carting – Administrator & GM met with Minister Pavey re SDLAM project – project is dead in the water and told Environmental Minister that it is over and put it back to the Menindee people. Ensuring water flows into Menindee is critical and connectivity. Money which was allocated for the Menindee project, maybe this money could come to the Western Weirs project. Council also presented to the Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW. Council has Weirs at Tilpa & Wilcannia.

Broken Hill

Broken Hill were represented at the Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW.

Question to CEO of Murray Darling Association - Where are we up to with the RAMSAR listing of the Menindee Lakes ?

CEO Response – It was passed as a resolution in 2018?? At the National Conference however we haven't been advocating.

Question to CEO of Murray Darling Association - Can we put this on the agenda for advocacy for the MDA? For MDA Region 4 & MDA National Conference the advocacy was a priority.

CEO MDA Report – See attached

CEO Emma Bradbury reflected on the upcoming MDA National Conference in Wentworth and advised she is excited and the MDA are currently working on the agenda for the Conference.

The CEO also advised that in all meetings & consultation processes connectivity of the system is always on the agenda.

5.2 Water Meetings Attended

Nil

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 MDA National Conference & AGM – Guide for the submission of Motions (attached)

Call for Motions open:	4 January 2021
Accepting of Motions closes	12 April 2021
MDA National Conference and AGM:	17-19 May 2021

Question from floor -Do we have results of what we have achieved from the motions at National Conference?

CEO -Yes these are tracked in the annual report.

Region 4 call on the MDA to advocate that connectivity of the whole of the Murray Darling system be a priority and be included and considered in all water sharing plans.

Moved: Cr Eltone

Seconded: Cr Reynolds

CARRIED

6.2 Three Minute video from each Council in Region 4 (see attached document)

An invitation is extended to all Region 4 councils to submit a 3 minute video highlighting their community and region at the 2021 National Conference. This video which will be showcased to delegates throughout the conference, offering a unique opportunity to promote your region to Councillors from all across the Basin, as well as key state and federal decision makers.

6.3 Wentworth Shire Council motion - MDA name change

At the 16 December 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Wentworth Shire Council the following resolution was carried.

That Council not support the name change from Murray Darling Association to Murray-Darling Local Government Association.

The Chair, Cr MacAllister requests that other Councils in Region 4 provide their motions/feedback regarding the name change to the MDA.

The Chair, Cr MacAllister requests that MDA Region 4 also provide feedback by passing a motion relation to the name change.

- 6.4** Name of MDA Regions – At the MDA Board meeting 22 February 2021 it was mentioned that MDA Regions are identified by number only, which does not give outsiders an idea of where in the basin that region is located. Chair, Cr MacAllister has requested member Council's consider a name for the region, and/or a logo and provide feedback to MDA Region 4 for the next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING 8 June 2021 AGM

8. CLOSE 1:54pm

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



Chief Executive Officer's Report
January 2021

Emma Bradbury
ceo@mda.asn.au

1. Introduction

We are extremely excited to have employed an Executive Assistant who will be commencing employment with the MDA on Monday 22nd February 2021.

Our new Executive team member has over eight years of experience in providing executive support to Mayor and councillors.

Her exceptional skills and experience with her business acumen, extensive administration skills, knowledge, and passion for the agricultural industry and with her knowledge of local government is an exciting addition to the executive team.



A big thank you and best wishes to outgoing secretariat Alex O'Keefe for all her wonderful hard work and effort during her time as Region 11 secretariat. You will be missed, and we wish you all the best for the future.

Alex O'Keefe, Chair Region 11 Cr. John Campbell, and Emma Bradbury

2. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
16/12/2020	Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub	Zoom
16/12/2020	University of New England	Phone
17/12/2020	Wentworth Shire Council – National Conference 2021 Planning Committee Meeting	Zoom
13/01/2021	Mayor C. Davies, Michael Drum and Mike Bennett: Re Options for return of over recovery	Zoom
14/01/2021	One Basin CRC interview preparations	Zoom
18/01/2021	Region 12 Strategy Meeting Mayor O'Toole & Matt Magin	Zoom
19/01/2021	Federal Minister the Hon Sussan Ley Community Meeting	Moama
21/01/2021	Dubbo Regional Council	Zoom
21/01/2021	Mayor Weller – Campaspe Regional Council	Echuca

27/01/2021	Julia Telford : Engage and Create Consulting – Leadership Program	Zoom
27/01/2021	Region 2 Executive Membership Base	Zoom
28/01/2021	Inspector General Water Compliance: The Hon Troy Grant and Chair Cr David Thurley OAM	Zoom
28/01/2021	Claire Butler Far West RRO National Drought and Flood Office. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet	Zoom
29/01/2021	Region 6 Symposium Working Group	Zoom
02/02/2021	The Mulloon Institute – Partnering relationship	Zoom
03/02/2021	ABC Interview – NSW Country Hour with Michael Condon	Telephone
04/02/2021	Managing Deliverability Risks in the River Murray System-MDBA	Zoom
04/02/2021	Region 1 Strategic Engagement Plan 2021	Zoom
09/02/2021	Peter Cullen Trust – Leadership Program Delivery	Zoom
10/02/2021	CSIRO – Terms of Reference Science Advisory Group discussions	Zoom
11/02/2021	Region 6 Leadership Program and Planning Committee Symposium discussions	Zoom
12/02/2021	The Boarder Regional Organisation of Councils	Inverall NSW
12/02/2021	Region 11 Ordinary Meeting	Inverall NSW
12/02/2021	Mr Jim Bentley Deputy Secretary DPIE NSW	Zoom
15/02/2021	Bogan Shire – Nyngan Mayor Ray Donald OAM and GM Derek Francis	Nyngan NSW
15/02/2021	Cobar Shire Council – Cobar – GM Peter Vlatko and Peter Abbott	Cobar NSW
16/02/2021	Coonamble Shire Council – Mayor Al Karanouh and GM Hein Basson	Coonamble NSW
16/02/2021	Warren Shire Council – Mayor Milton Quigley and Interim General Manager Mr Stephen Glen	Warren NSW
17/02/2021	Mid-Western Council – Mayor Des Kennedy and GM Brad Cam	Mudgee NSW
17/02/2021	Warrumbungle Shire Council – Mayor Ambrose and GM Roger Bailey	Coonabarabran NSW
18/02/2021	Region 2 Ordinary Meeting - Yenbena Cultural Centre	Zoom
18/02/2021	Region 7 Ordinary Meeting	Zoom
19/02/2021	Mr Jim Bentley and Kaia Hodge DPIE NSW	Sydney

3. 77th National Conference and AGM

On behalf of the team here, I am absolutely thrilled to officially launch the webpage and invite you to the **Murray Darling Association's 77th National Conference and AGM** to be held **16 - 19 May 2021** in **Wentworth, NSW**. To register for the event, please visit the conference registration website [here](#).

Themed **Connectivity: Connecting Councils and Catchments**, this exciting event will bring together leaders and decision makers from across the Murray-Darling Basin, and will be a wonderful opportunity to meet again, face to face.

The MDA's 77th National Conference & AGM is ***your opportunity*** to be part of the solution – to join the conversation, to inform future policy, and to engage with the innovators, scientists, educators, and leaders of our time.

Join us in Wentworth, where the mighty rivers connect; where local, technical, and political leaders will come together to tackle the big issues of the Basin and forge a future of connected councils and catchments.

The program for presenters and guest speakers is well underway. The Planning committee are working on all logistical matters to secure a whole Wentworth tourist experience.

4. Basin Community Leadership Program

The Basin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) will recommence Face to Face Workshops in a COVID-19-safe environment this March.

The MDA is collaborating with Julia Spicer of [Engage & Create Consulting](#) to facilitate the Queensland & Northern NSW Workshops.

The details are as follows:

- **Cunnamulla 29-30th March 2021**
- **Dirranbandi 31-1st April 2021**
- **St George 6-7th April 2021**
- **Collarenebri 8-9th April 2021**

Recruitment is underway for these workshops with participants completing the MDA Academy Online Training prior to attending the face-to-Face workshops. The Online Academy covers five modules including: Leadership Theory; Water Literacy and Communicating with Impact.

The MDA will work in partnership with each of these towns to support the community, boost the local economy and encourage trade in small businesses with the remainder of the workshops to be rolled out across the rest of the year in the same format.

5. Region 10A Engagement Strategy with Mayor Craig Davies.

This month myself and Mayor Davies, Narromine Council visited several councils within NSW to discuss the Macquarie-Castlereagh Over-recovery of water in the Macquarie-Castlereagh and Gwydir valleys impacting communities in the region, and to engage with councils to articulate the benefits of membership.

We also travelled to Sydney to meet with Mr Jim Bentley the Deputy Secretary DPIE NSW to discuss the following matters raised by members in recent months.

- DPIE/Water NSW Notices during recent rainfall events regarding inflows
- Application of the Resumption of Flow policy

- Application of the Pump Metering Policy
- Development of the Floodplain Harvesting Policy
- Ownership of the Pooncarie Wier
- Macquarie-Castlereagh Over-recovery
- Optimising the Murrumbidgee River–Yanga Lake Connectivity

Engagement Report on the benefits of membership:

With over 167 councils in the MDB, the ongoing partnership between Councils and the Murray Darling Association elevates local and regional issues and priorities to the state and federal level providing national recognition of local priorities.

Membership to the MDA delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits to each community by creating partnerships, participating in events, and accessing networks and services that align with and support all Community plans, in the areas of Community, Environment, Economy and Council.

We know that councils and the local government sector are increasingly resource challenged and are looking for services, relationships and partnerships that assist in achieving your council's and your region's strategic priorities.

Water, land management, energy and community wellbeing are front and centre of almost every council's priorities. A strong relationship between council and the MDA provides opportunities to

- partner with councils and regional groups in providing local case studies and experience to support regional and national positions and advocacy strategies.
- raise the profile of your council and the local government sector through MDA's partnerships with the Commonwealth.
- present strategically aligned priorities, objectives, and advocacy to state and federal governments.
- leverage regional efficiencies and Basin-scale capability and positions.

Benefits to your community.

The MDA fosters a culture of community collaboration and leadership development to improve social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Working together with member councils and our regions, we achieve policy change and ensure local knowledge informs the national dialogue on water reform, land management, environmental sustainability, leadership development and education, and regional economic diversification.

Council's participation at MDA region and national meetings builds regional relationships and elevates the community's priorities to the state and federal level, informing decisions and outcomes that impact your local area.

Benefits to your environment.

There is no future on a dry riverbed. At the core of our vision is a strong emphasis on science and education to inform policies for the sustainable management of Basin resources to ensure a healthy and prosperous future.

The MDA's vision, which drives our strategic and operational direction, is for *local government and communities to work together to achieve a healthy, vibrant and thriving Murray-Darling Basin*. As a result, the MDA has:

- Partnered with CSIRO with a focus on science and education to address some of the Basin's toughest challenges.
- Advocated for and represented local government in environmental issues, including floodplain harvesting etc.
- Partnered with Murray-Darling Basin Authority, better supporting local government through information sharing and representation.
- Supported regions to develop Climate Ready Communities statements

Benefits to your economy.

For many, if not all, Basin communities, water security plays an important role in economic growth and sustainability. Through the MDA's regional alignments and partnerships, member councils leverage the value of knowledge sharing across the local government and regional development sectors to peruse water quality, water security and other priorities.

The MDA provides member councils with partnerships that support regional economic development and diversification initiatives.

Benefits to your council.

Our mission is to provide high value services to our members, and their communities by delivering quality projects, events and products create enduring value for Basin communities and governments.

Our achievements

The Murray Darling Association has been successful in shifting policies to better reflect the needs of the Basin communities, and we are continuing to grow our reach and impact as portrayed in our [Vision 2025 Strategic Plan](#).

The relationship between the MDA and our member Councils contributes strongly to the development of the local government sector as a whole and our collective role in ensuring a vibrant, sustainable future for the Murray-Darling Basin.

Councils visited:

- *Cobar Shire Council - Cobar*
- *Bogan Shire Council – Nyngan*
- *Coonamble Shire Council – Coonamble*
- *Warren Shire Council – Warren*
- *Coonabarabran Council – Coonabarabran*
- *Mid-Western Council - Mudgee*



Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer