



## Region 4 Ordinary Meeting

Tuesday 8 September 2020 – 1:00pm EST

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

## MINUTES

### 1. ATTENDANCE

Meeting opened at 1:23pm

In Person	By Teleconference
Cr Jane MacAllister (Wentworth Shire Council)	Cr Darriea Turley (Broken Hill City Council)
Cr Jason Modica (Mildura Rural City Council)	Emma Bradbury (CEO – MDA)
Ken Ross (Wentworth Shire Council)	Greg Hill (Central Darling Shire Council)
Cr Steve Heywood (Wentworth Shire Council)	Gavin Helgeland (Balranald Shire Council)
Cr Tim Elstone (Wentworth Shire Council)	Cr Marion Browne (Broken Hill Shire Council)
Gayle Marsden (Wentworth Shire Council)	
Chloe Horne (Wentworth Shire Council)	

### 2. APOLOGIES

Cr Anthony Cirrillo

#### Motion

That the apology from Cr Cirillo be accepted.

**Moved: Cr Modica**

**Seconded: Cr Elstone**

**CARRIED**

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cr MacAllister declared that she is employed by the Nature Conservation Council.

### 4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2020 be accepted as circulated.

**Moved: Cr Turley**

**Seconded: Cr Modica**

### 5. BUSINESS ARISING

- The letter of congratulations was sent to Cr Thurley and a thank you was received.
- This Region continues to support a Royal Commission into the MDBA.
- There were no motions for the MDA Annual Conference from MDA Region 4
- Broken Hill City Council & Mildura Rural City Council has a Climate Policy the others don't

### 6. REPORTS

The following verbal reports to be provided:

## 6.1 MDA Report – Emma Bradbury & Cr MacAllister

- The Murray Darling Association's contribution to the productivity commission on water was based on the interests of all of the regions. The MDA aims to be a neutral body representing all Local Government areas and views.
- The Government's announcements regarding water buybacks has been welcomed by the MDA however, not all Regions agree.
- Water for the Environment special account – 450ML will not be recovered.
- Consistency from all Councils for the MDB connectivity of the river needs to be prioritized.
- Across all MDA Regions there is a consistent message of failings in community consultation and lack of reliance on scientific evidence by Government.

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

### **Balranald Shire Council**

- Committing to a base line survey of Lake Yanga, Yanga Creek & Murrumbidgee River. The Baseline data for hydraulic survey will be used to gain an understanding of what water savings can be realised. Engaging with DPIE at the moment in regard to this project.
- Rolling out a program for drinking water policies – collecting data through water samples to optimize the quality of water

### **Broken Hill City Council**

- Broken Hill City Council have taken a stand and moved motion regarding the SDLAM & Menindee SAG issues, which was passed unanimously.
- Discussions have been had with a student doing a thesis under Prof Richard Kingsford. The report will be used to present to Government. It will be an exposé regarding the construction of the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline.

### **Central Darling Shire Council**

- Council has written to Minister Pavey & Minister Marshall regarding the SDLAM & Menindee SAG voicing disappointment. Council has also produced a media release on behalf of three Councils (Central Darling, Broken Hill & Wentworth) regarding the same issues. Currently there is still water flowing over the weir at Wilcannia and a small flow of water over Weir 32 as well. The Wilcannia Weir project has been deferred for 12 months for further environmental studies.
- Menindee Old Town Weir requires further works to remove remaining structure and silting. Timeframe is currently uncertain.

### **Mildura Rural City Council**

- Passed water policy calling for a royal commission / register of water/ audit of flood plain harvesting. Politics runs the show rather than science. Need to talk to Politicians about the things they don't want to hear.

### **Wentworth Shire Council**

- In line with other Councils Wentworth Shire Council have supported the Menindee SAG voicing disappointment with consultation and opposing the options put forward for the SDLAM. The communities opinions are being ignored. Environmental flows are needed for fish need to breed and if they don't release water the opportunity will be missed. ACCC interim report into the First Flush event has been released.
- Menindee Lakes and the river - how do you get the right balance? We are fighting to get water to the Menindee Lakes then the Department have announced they will let it go as quickly as they can. It seems the Top (Northern Basin) are doing what they like – the Bottom is getting a lot of water and the Middle (being Wilcannia to Wentworth) is missing out.

- Cate Fairman MP was here on the weekend talking to people about the NSW enquiry into the dams & state significant infrastructure.

6.3 Chair Cr MacAllister attended the following Water Meetings:

18 July 2020 - Menindee SDL Project Stakeholder Advisory Group

21 July 2020 - Critical Water Advisory Panel

12 August 2020 - Lower Darling Stakeholder Meeting

15 August 2020 - Informal meeting at Sunset Strip to discuss strategy and concerns

2 September 2020 - Lower Darling Stakeholder Meeting to be briefed on environmental watering including pulse for Murray Cod and Golden Perch breeding

## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 7.1 Motions for MDA National Conference

There is a clash with Wentworth Shire Council Ordinary Council meeting and the MDA AGM so Wentworth Council representatives won't be able to attend.

CEO of the MDA requested that the following motions be closely looked at prior to the AGM.

Motion 5.8, 5.9, 5.13, 5.14 & 5.15

Voting for the conference - attendees will receive an email to attend the conference, you click a button and you are livestreamed into the event.

*Cr Turley left meeting at 2.30pm*

*Emma Bradbury left meeting at 2.30pm*

### 7.2 Menindee Lakes SDLAM (attachments)

For information only

### 7.3 Australia Institute document – Analysis of Unredacted Condamine-Balonne water valuation documents

For information only

### 7.4 Volume of water extracted from the February floods and how little made it to Menindee Lakes & the Wentworth Junction. Could the MDA support a scientific paper in how this affects the Health of the individual streams and over all system as well as birds flora and fauna?

Slattery & Johnson are currently working on a paper that will do estimates on volumes held in the Northern Basin and hence how much was taken.

### 7.5 Update on the Barkandji native title claim over the Darling Barka and how that may be used to help bring historic flows back to the system.

A Native Title claim was passed but there is no water attached to it.

### 7.6 Meeting Clash

#### **Motion**

That Region 4 write to the President, CEO & Board of the MDA expressing concern that a scheduling conflict with the Wentworth SC Council meeting and the AGM of the MDA especially considering that Wentworth Shire Council is the host of the 2021 Annual Conference.

**Moved: Cr Browne**

**Seconded: Cr Modica**

**CARRIED**

## 8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING Proposed 8 December 2020

## 9 CLOSE 2.50pm

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks*

*Wentworth Shire Council for their support in  
hosting this meeting of Region 4.*