



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

[admin@mda.asn.au](mailto:admin@mda.asn.au)

[www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)  
T (03) 5480 3805

ABN: 64 636 490 493

P.O. Box 1268  
Echuca, Vic 3564

## Region 5 Annual General Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday 15 March 2022

Commencing 10.00am at the Mid Murray Council  
& Via Zoom Video Conferencing

### 1. COMMENCEMENT & WELCOME                      The Meeting commenced at 10.00am

The Chair declared the meeting open and welcomed all present.

Cr P Raison advised this would be his last official meeting. He thank everyone for giving him the opportunity to be Chair of Region 5. He really appreciates all the help he has received and has learnt a lot from the MDA. Cr P Raison also thanked Emma (previous CEO), all the MDA staff and the new CEO Mark Lamb for all their help.

### 2. ATTENDANCE

Present:	Cr Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council
	Cr Jeff Hall	Mid Murray Council
	Cr Andrew Kassebaum	Berri Barmera Council
	Cr Peter Hunter	Renmark Paringa Council
	Mark Lamb	Chief Executive Officer, Murray Darling Association
	Tim Phillips	Communications & Engagement Officer, Murray Darling Association
	Rachel Barratt	Project Director, Jacobs
	Claire Aitkenhead	Project Manager / Engagement Coordination, Jacobs

Apologies:	Mayor Leon Stasinowsky	District Council of Loxton Waikerie
	Cr Peter Walker	District Council of Loxton Waikerie
	Cr Kym Webber	District Council of Loxton Waikerie
	Mayor Neil Martinson	Renmark Paringa Council
	Cr Margaret Howie	Renmark Paringa Council

### 3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Nil

### 4. AGM MINUTES

#### Moved Cr A Kassebaum

That the Minutes of the Murray Darling Association Region 5 Annual General Meeting held on the 24 May 2021 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### Seconded Cr J Hall

CARRIED

## 5. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

### 5.1 Region 5 Chairperson

Cr Andrew Kassebaum, Berri Barmera Council was unopposed and duly elected.

### 5.2 Region 5 Executive Committee

The following were appointed to the Region 5 Executive Committee:

Cr Ella Winnall (Proxy)	Berri Barmera Council
Cr Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council
Cr Peter Walker	District Council of Loxton Waikerie.
Cr Margaret Howie	Renmark Paringa Council
Cr Peter Hunter (Proxy)	Renmark Paringa Council

## 6. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 6.2 MDA Region 6 – “Inter-regional Meeting – 29 April 2022”

#### Moved Cr J Hall

That at least one representative from Region 5 will attend the inter-regional meeting with Regions 6 & 7 on the 29 April 2022.

#### Seconded Cr A Kassebaum

CARRIED

**ACTION:** Cr A Kassebaum will contact Region 6 to let them know that Region 5 has agreed to the 29 April 2022 and to find out the location of the meeting. Location details will be circulate to all members.

## 7. MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION REPORTS

### 7.1 CEO’s Report

The CEO discussed the following:

- Financials – identifying reoccurring forms of income
- Echuca office was closed on the 16 December (lease expired). M Lamb thanked T Phillips for his help with shutting the office down. T Phillips will continue to work in Echuca from home. The City of Albury has provided M Lamb with an office at the Council office in Albury.
- MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program (BCLP), starts on the 21 March 2022 in Victoria and finishes 31 March 2022 in South Australia. Looking to continue this program beyond March.

#### Program Dates for South Australia

Cobdogla – Barmera – Berri	28 March 2022
Loxton	29 March 2022
Swan Reach	30 March 2022
Lower Lakes	31 March 2022

- MDA 78<sup>th</sup> National Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held between 19-21 September 2022 in Albury NSW

10.15am Rachel Barratt & Claire Aitkenhead from Jacobs attended the meeting via Zoom

## 6. GENERAL BUSINESS CONT'D

### 6.1 Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association Water Position Paper

Rachel Barratt and Claire Aitkenhead from Jacobs provided an overview on the Water Position Paper and what stage the project was up to.

- The purpose for developing the Water Position Paper is to create a unified position, provide clear recommendations, articulate the role of Local Government, enable the region to participate in future water management conversations and enhance water literacy.
- The project has four stages
  - 1 Desktop review and analysis – Completed
  - 2 Stakeholder engagement – currently in this stage now.  
Discussed their approach to stakeholder engagement.
  - 3 Regional Impact Statement
  - 4 Water Position Paper.

R Barratt asked Region 5 for feedback on what matters to Region 5 in regards to future water security and resiliency of the region.

The following questions were asked:

1. What opportunities do you see such a Position Paper providing the Region?
2. What would you like to see included in the Position Paper? What are the critical gaps or recommendations?
3. Thinking about water as an enabler for values in the region: What is the role of Local Government to lead/support/advocate for opportunities to make us more resilient and better users of available water resources?

Summary of comments/answers provided by Region 5

- Cr P Raison – It is important that people are educated in what happens with water and how it is distributed. Would like this paper to be concise and accurate and all industries across the board need to be covered, not just the irrigators people see on the river. A layperson should be able to read and understand the Paper.
- R Barratt – First product they are going to produce is a Regional Impact Statement that will give an accurate picture on how water is used who's using water and dispel some of the myths surrounding this.
- Cr A Kassebaum – Water security and the ability to deliver water to the State and end user is paramount as the Basin Plan is all about moving water around to the highest value crop, that is primary processing, what happens then, how do you take a low value crop and make it into a higher value output. Do we need to develop secondary processing within the region that has a higher standing to deliver the water to the State. The ability to deliver water when crops need it is a big issue, Local Government needs to advocate that planning processes for developments need to be more robust and consideration given to how they get the water to that location.
- Cr P Hunter – Would like to see a clear concise statement on how South Australia manages its water licenses and allocations. NSW and Victoria need to be aware that our situation is different from them in terms of how we allocate water and what is permanent and what is not.
- Cr P Hunter – In relation to the position of the MDA, we are a group as delegates from Councils providing a basin wide view, it is important that it emphasise the potential for the MDA to grow and develop and continue nationally in those arguments for this Paper and others that emerge.
- Cr A Kassebaum – Need to advocate that the Basin plan as presented needs to be completed before we move onto the next iteration of the plan. R & D in Water and Efficiency One Basin CRC – we need to advocate for more R & D in what is the next technology that irrigation, irrigators, processors and Council can access to provide alternative water resources for high value crops and for communities who are on the river

- Cr P Hunter – Should try to pull together a concise summary/chart of everyone that has a finger in the pie and their roles – Department of Environment and Water, Landscape Boards, Murray Darling Association, Federal, State and Local Governments.
- R Barratt – It would be really useful in the Regional Impact Statement where it becomes a document that outlines the functions and lease of water.
- Cr A Kassebaum – Environment Resilience Basin Plan is about moving to high value products and returning water to the environment. Local Government in this area can advocate for better river operations and movement of environmental water around the Basin to achieve outcomes which provide the environment to be more resilient when the next drought comes along. This is what environmental water is used for, to build up the flood plains resilience and habitat during the wet times so during the dry times they actually survive and get through to the next wet period. Local government needs to advocate for better transparency about what the environmental water holder is doing with all that water.
- Cr P Raison – At the moment, there is plenty of water coming down the Basin and people think that there will never be another drought. We need to educate them that there will be another drought and that South Australian only gets a certain amount of gigolitres from over the boarder every year.
- Cr P Hunter – This is an opportunity for us to recognise the work that has already been done by the environmental regulators and other groups. A snapshot of what is happening at the moment would be useful in understanding environmental water, what is next, how is it managed and how will that set us up for the future
- Cr A Kassebaum – Next actions to be done should be on the Darling River as opposed to the Murray River corridor. The Basin Plan stipulates that every point of extraction needs to be metered. It needs to be metered in such a way that it's all connected electronically and the extraction of water monitored from the Darling, Murrumbidgee, Goulburn Rivers and all the tributes of the River Murray.
- Cr P Hunter – The health of the river is just not about getting clean water to a person at Mannum or another town, it's about the overall biodiversity within the River and wetlands. This is critical to tourism, locals and mental health.
- R Barratt – If you reviewed the Position Paper now what would you not want to see, what do you not want this to be? Is there anything that should be touched on or anything you think is not appropriate.
- Cr P Hunter – Do not play the blame game and it not become political. It is important to be tight and concise. There should be a process for the future reviews and evaluation in 2 years or 12 months as things change constantly.
- Cr P Raison – Should be a fluid document that can be built on. Need to maintain a positive attitude and educationally sound attitude.
- Cr P Hunter – There is a need for us to almost market to Adelaide about the value of the River Murray for irrigation, river communities and the incredible biodiversity and the need for the groups up here and down the length of the Murray.
- R Barratt – There is an increased focus on food security and being able to produce our own food and fiber for multi reasons, whether it be wars or COVID. I think that probably reinforces the importance of looking after that asset that supplies our food and fiber and the importance of the Regions to do that, maybe that's something we can build on that current sentiment
- Cr A Kassebaum – That's part of the reason why I talk about secondary processing its starting to occur now with Thomas foods getting into the alternative meat business. They can value add products out of this region in a different direction. I think secondary processing and tertiary opportunity for this region is to take our raw products and provide an outcome that cities of Australia require.

- Cr A Kassebaum – Agrees with Peter’s comment regarding marketing opportunity of the region to the Adelaide water users. Just because it comes out of a tap, it has come from somewhere and this is how it all connects through to that tap. Just not Adelaide it needs to be a statewide educational piece.
- Cr P Hunter – Sometime all we hear is about tourism, tourism, we need to take a step back and look at the facts. Irrigation/agricultural is far of in excess in terms of its employment and dollars for our regions. Need to put back in perspective the facts in terms of the value to our communities and to the State.

Cr P Raison thanked Rachel Barratt and Claire Aitkenhead for attending the meeting. If there is anything members would like to contribute, it can be submitted through the Reps on the Water Policy Working Group or direct to C Aitkenhead and R Barratt.

Once the draft Paper has been done R Barratt and C Aitkenhead will be back to speak to Region 5 for their input, should be around May.

11.00am Rachel Barratt & Claire Aitkenhead from Jacobs left the meeting via Zoom

## **7. MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION REPORTS CONT’D**

### **7.1 CEO’s Report Cont’d**

M Lamb continued his report.

- Engaging across the board to build relationships with: Federal and State Ministers on both sides, Andrew Reynolds at the Murray Darling Authority and Chief Regulator / Compliance.
- Developing a joint venture approach with One Basin CRC Melbourne University.
- Circular Economy – The CSIRO has partnered with the MDA for their project regarding the circular economy. M Lamb hopes to roll this out over the next couple of months, this will hopefully bring in some recurrent funding for the MDA because the circular economy is project that is current now for the next three months. Hoping to get sign off this week from the CSIRO the MDA then can start rolling it out in April, May and June and wrap it up at the end of June. This would bring in some immediate funding for the MDA.

The second and third iteration of this would be about plastics and the third one would be safe water quality so these are scientific projects the CSIRO wants to work on. MDA would be engaging with communities for example across the Murray Darling Basin with a view to getting feedback about what the circular economy looks like and how they feel about it and how it can be implemented and what are the opportunities.

- Looking at tender opportunities for potential grants.
- Cr A Kassebaum – With regards to the circular economy, one of the big issues in this region is the disposal of poly pipe. The Berri Barmera Council are trying to find a solution to this problem. At the moment they currently have a Waste Strategy Procurement process happening. This has identified the disposal of poly pipe and perm pine post as two trouble waste streams. It would be good if the CISRO could come up with a good way to get rid of it.
- Cr P Raison – Would like to know the CSIRO’s position on the carp virus, what is their long term strategic Plan for carp in the river. M Lamb will raise this with the CSIRO.

### **7.2 MDA Board Meeting Minutes**

#### **Moved Cr A Kassebaum**

That the MDA Board Meeting Minutes be received.

#### **Seconded J Hall**

CARRIED

## 8. OTHER BUSINESS

- Cr A Kassebaum will contact Region 6 regarding the inter region meeting and tell them that Region 5 has agreed to the 29 April and find out the location. If anyone has anything they would like to discuss at this meeting, let him know and he will forward it on.
- Cr A Kassebaum might contact Rachel Barrett and Claire Aitkenhead regarding the Water Position Paper and see if they have anything available to start presenting, to test the actual outcomes, which is due late April, they would be getting close to that point so will approach them and see if they want to start testing some of their assumptions even the impact statement.
- Cr P Raison thanked T Brophy for her secretariat work over the last couple of years and appreciate that it has been hard over the last two years due to COVID.

Thanked Cr Peter Hunter and Cr Andrew Kassabaum for their help and their expertise over his time as Chair of Region 5. It has been a good learning experience for him and will still have a very big interest in the MDA.

- M Lamb thanked Cr P Raison for being Chair of Region 5 over the last few year and his contribution.

## 9. MEETING SCHEDULE

The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 13 June 2022 at the Renmark Paringa Council offices and via zoom.

For your information, proposed future meeting dates / location.

- Monday 12 September 2022 – Berri Barmera Council & via zoom
- Monday 12 December 2022 – District Council of Karoonda East Murray & via zoom
- Tuesday 14 March 2022 (AGM) – District Council of Loxton Waikerie & via zoom
- Monday 19 June 2023 – Mid Murray Council & via zoom

Cr P Hunter put in an apology for the inter-regional meeting proposed for the 29 April 2022 and the next MDA Region 5 meeting on the 13 June 2022.

## 10. CLOSURE

11.08am The outgoing Chair declared the meeting closed.

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks the Mid Murray Council for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 5.*