
5. REPORTS

5.1 Chief Executive Officer

- As per online Report - [CEO Report](#)
- Memberships – Value and importance of individual memberships. It is an issue that is constantly being focused on. Rules provide for individual members to join MDA. However, this should be monitored carefully to ensure members are able to make a strong contribution.
- 26-28 July attended meetings in Canberra with a variety of organisations to discuss similar topics.
- Motions reflect the actions that can be taken for the communities across the Basin.
- Final review of annual report taking place at the Board Meeting on Monday and will be released shortly.
- Annual Conference – The CEO discussed guest speakers who will feature at the Conference. The registration cost has been revised to encourage more members and individuals to attend the virtual conference.
- Cr Petty had a question regarding the previous month CEO Report regarding the regional boundaries. The CEO advised that MDA regional boundaries are a matter of historic and was based on communities of interest. Over the past years, MDA have realised it is not serving the purpose any longer. Drafting of the first discussion paper has commenced - catchment areas, Economic Development and LGA areas.
 - Mayor Jamie Chaffey would like to forward some information to MDA regarding the upcoming Namoi Economic Supply Chain Project - Govt/Business Presentation (ZOOM Meeting taking place on Monday 17 August) and would also like the CEO to attend so that the MDA are able to stay abreast to the information and the project which is worth \$4million over 4 years.

5.2 MDA Board Meeting

- As per previous [Minutes](#)

Chief Executive Officer left the meeting at 1.45pm

5.3 MDBA Update – Sally Dickenson

- Thanked the group for the opportunity to join the meeting.
- The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's recently published 'Assessment of take and protection during first flush flows in the Northern Basin'. Public submissions for the draft report closed on Sunday 9 August 2020. A final report will be prepared for submission to the Secretary of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, which is due by 7 September 2020.
- The [Minister for Water has announced that Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC \(Ret'd\) has been appointed as the Chair of the Murray Darling Basin Authority for the next four years](#). Sir Angus Houston is the former chief of the Defence Force. There has been a long gap between the term ending for the previous Chair, Neil Andrew, and this appointment.
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) interim report on its inquiry into Murray–Darling Basin water markets has been released. The ACCC was tasked by the Australian Government in August 2019 to recommend

options to enhance markets for tradeable water rights, including options to enhance their operations, transparency, regulation, competitiveness and efficiency. The ACCC is now seeking feedback on its interim findings and recommendations, with the final report due to the Australian Government for consideration at the end of November 2020.

<https://www.accc.gov.au/focus-areas/inquiries-ongoing/murray-darling-basin-water-markets-inquiry/interim-report>

- Remaining NSW Water Resource Plans have been submitted to the MDBA to be assessed prior to being submitted to the minister.
- The NSW Government has launched the Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy 2020 for the northern Murray–Darling Basin. The policy applies to landholders in the northern Murray–Darling Basin who will receive a floodplain harvesting water-access license under the NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy (2018) in 2021 and will allow water harvested from northern Basin floodplains to be accurately and reliably measured for the first time. Floodplain Harvesting Implementation webinar Wednesday, 19 August 2020, 10:30am - 12:30pm. This is a great example of the Basin Plan in action, as it stems from the commitment by NSW to review floodplain harvesting following the MDBA's Compliance Review in 2017 and its commitment to the Basin Compliance Compact. We are seeing floodplain harvesting in NSW come into the regulated system for the first time and this will eventually be represented in the NSW water resource plans. The engagement package includes a series of informative videos on the work being done and expected outcomes of changes to the way water harvested from floodplains is managed and measured in the northern Murray–Darling Basin.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Region 11 Naming Convention

- There are certain mentions in the MDA records as region 11 being “Northern Rivers”. Those in attendance agreed that the Region can and should be called “New England and North West” wherever it is necessary. The Northern Rivers is considered as a geographical location on the Eastern side of the dividing ranges.

6.2 Online Water Dashboard

- Website – www.waterinsites.watarnsw.gov.au – released and updated by DPI

6.3 National Conference

- As previously discussed by the CEO.

Standing orders were suspended at 2.13pm whilst waiting for Dr. Lindsay White to join the meeting. Andrew Johns left the meeting at 2.16pm

Standing Orders resumed at 2.30pm

7. PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Dr. Lindsay White

- Dr White presented on:
 - Who does what in the water space in the northern Basin;
 - The role of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder;
 - The water managed – licences previously used for irrigation;
 - The example of water management in the last four years;

- Plans for the coming year for use of Commonwealth water for the environment; and
- Links between the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office and communities and councils.

Summary brochure for the Water Management Plan – northern Basin:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/19ef8108-b607-4988-b67d-080ed596dfe3/files/northern-murray-darling-basin-water-environment-20-21-planning-overview.pdf>

Full Water Management Plan:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/publications/water-management-plan-2020-21>

Examples of community ‘updates’

- Lower Balonne: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/lower-balonne-updates>
- Gwydir: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/gwydir-valley-river-refuge-pool-flow>
- Namoi: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/namoi/catchment-updates>
- Border Rivers and Gwydir together as part of the Northern Fish Flow into the Barwon: <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/northern-fish-flow-2019>
- Monitoring (Basin-wide): <https://flow-mer.org.au/>

A copy of Dr White’s presentation will be available to Member Councils upon request.

8. NEXT MEETING

To be held on Friday 13 November at 1:00pm

9. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 3.13pm