



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Region 11 Meeting
8:30am, Thursday 7 November, 2019
Gunnedah Shire Council

MINUTES – November 2019

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Cr John Campbell - Chair	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr Jamie Chaffey	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr Rob Hooke	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr Owen Hasler	Gunnedah Shire Council
Annabelle Guest*	REO, MDBA
Cr Gae Swain	Gunnedah Shire Council
Andrew Johns	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr John Coulton	Gwydir Shire Council
Emma Bradbury	CEO MDA

- * Non-member– attendance by invitation
Attendance by teleconference

1.2 Apologies

Cr Creg Sauer	Tenterfield Shire Council
Cr Don Forbes	Tenterfield Shire Council
Cr Peter Petty	Tenterfield Shire Council
Cr Brian Murray	Tenterfield Shire Council
Noelene Hyde	Tenterfield Shire Council & Secretariat BROCC
Cr Frances Young	Gwydir Shire Council
Cr Ian Woodcock	Walgett Shire Council
Cr Bill Murray	Walgett Shire Council
Cr Kelly Smith	Walgett Shire Council
Greg Ingham	Walgett Shire Council – General Manager
Mike Urquhart	Walgett Shire Council – CFO

Action: That the apologies be accepted

Move J Chaffey/ R Hooke

Carried

2. WELCOME – Meeting commenced at 8.30am

2.1 Acknowledgment of Country

2.2 Cr John Campbell welcomed delegates and thanked them for their attendance.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil received

4. MINUTES

Motion: The minutes of the meeting held at Walgett on 9 August 2019 as circulated were accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting.

Action: Move J Campbell / R Hooke Carried

5. BUSINESS ARISING

NIL

6. REPORTS

6.1 Chief Executive Officer

Emma reported on the MDA National Conference:

- Successful event from all accounts and feedback received
- Motions have been incredibly strong and will be actioned in the coming weeks
- Has recently appointed a 2IC, Tony Banks who will be responsible for leadership and training.
- Cr Chaffey spoke of the Namoi Unlimited Advocacy trip to Canberra and the 22 Motions that were tabled at the meetings with Ministers. He asked if it was at all possible to share those recommendations with the MDA to have the support and extra voice. Emma was very supportive of this.
- Cr Chaffey also congratulated the CEO on the success of the recent conference.
- We need to focus on the importance of the combination of land, water and energy

- Extra Drought Stimulus Package – Emma advised that she did not have any further details regarding commitment of funding and the total amount. She is open to suggestions on the best way for MDA to access funding.
- Advised the draft Strategic Plan would be released to the Board prior to the end of the year.

Cr Campbell spoke of the Community Resilience Funding that Gunnedah Shire Council committed to at the last Council Ordinary meeting. The questions of how to regulate distribution of the funds is now the focus. Councillor Hooke has heard from other Councils that Rates relief is a possibility.

ACTION: MDA to enquire into the opportunity for a potential pilot program for water efficiencies with Region 11.

Emma left the meeting at 8.55am

Juliana McArthur (guest speaker) and John Coulton joined the meeting at 8.48am

6.2 Chairman's report

- Cr Campbell went through the Minutes from Board Meetings
- National Conference and AGM – reiterated the quality of the speakers
- Board member conduct in the Region – similar to that required of Councillors in the normal course
- Motions for the national conference – all passed with some minor amendments.
- President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer re-elected at the last board meeting.
- Draft Social Media Policy – Region Chairs to provide feedback
- MDB Socio-Economic Impacts Evaluation Framework Project Motion.
- The ACCC inquiry into water market – Feedback from region councils has been requested. Email 30/10/2019.

7. PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Juliana McArthur – President Gunnedah Business Chamber

- Juliana spoke of the advocacy trip to Canberra.
- Spoke of meetings with Mark Coulton, The Deputy Prime Ministers office and also the Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg regarding management of the current drought and also future management of droughts. Suggestions included the need for agricultural contractors to access the Farm Management Deposit Scheme,
- The group didn't receive any clear commitments from anyone they spoke to.
- Minister David Littleproud – Bradfield Scheme
- Cr Campbell asked the question as to whether there was any mention of assisting rural related businesses to access funding? Juliana advised that it was not small businesses in town that would be able to access the Farm Management Deposit Scheme.
- Cr Chaffey advised the group of the details via media release of the latest drought relief funding that was announced.

Councillor Colleen Fuller joined the meeting at 9.03am

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

Annabelle Guest – Update

- Namoi Water resource plan currently on public exhibition – water resource plans to be submitted to MDBA by December 2019.
- Socio Economic Panel
- Northern Basin Environmental Group – consist of a variety of stakeholders. Not much information on the group as it has just started up.
- MDBA under pressure re 60 Minutes story which aired recently. Independent investigation underway regarding report releasing process. No intention to name specific people or any malice intended.
- Attended the Australian Association of Cotton Scientist conference in Armidale recently.
- Feedback received regarding impacts of the drought that the group would like to be provided to the MDBA.
- ACCC doing an investigation into water trading and transparency of the water market. Holding some community consultations.

- Closed by saying, she chose to attend the MDA conference based on the quality of speakers and was thankful for Emma mentioning the RIO programs.
- The MDBA Annual Report is available if anyone wishes to access it.

Cr John Coulton

- Unregulated Streams – one area of water that is not touched and would it be a possibility to catch this water and dam it for irrigation use? Is there any funding available in this regard? It is an area that hasn't been spoken about and he believes should be discussed.

Action: John will discuss with Emma

Cr Colleen Fuller

- Has any consideration been given to having weirs/ fish ways at all towns along the river? Would they be considered an environmental positive?

9. NEXT MEETING

TBA

10. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 9.52am