



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Region 6 Information Meeting AGENDA

Location:	Murray Bridge Town Hall - Upstairs Meeting Room (<i>lift available</i>) Bridge Street, MURRAY BRIDGE
Time/date:	Meeting opened 9.58am, Friday 14 December 2018
Guest Speakers:	Peter Mettam , Senior Operations Officer (DEW) Andrew Beal , Director of River Murray Operations (DEW) On the ' Coorong Summit and Goyder Expert Panel Reports ' and the path forward
Acting Chair:	Shen Mann, Alexandrina Council
Executive Officer:	Tracey Strugnell, Coorong District Council

Alexandrina Council

1. WELCOME – Mayor Brenton Lewis – Rural City of Murray Bridge

2. ATTENDANCE

2.1 Present:

Voting Members:

Mayor Brenton Lewis	– Rural City of Murray Bridge
Heather Barclay	– Rural City of Murray Bridge
Tony Wilson as Proxy Malcom Downie	- Rural City of Murray Bridge
Councillor Vern Leng	- Coorong District Council
Councillor Brenton Qualmann	- Coorong District Council
Keith Loeser	- Private Member
Councillor Michael Scott	- Alexandrina Council
Julie Barrie	- Private Member

Guests:

Ian Mann	- Private Member
Tony Wilson	– Rural City of Murray Bridge
Mayor Paul Simmons	- Mayor, Coorong District Council
Councillor Tracy Hill	- Coorong District Council
Shen Mann	- Alexandrina Council
Councillor Clem Schubert	– Rural City of Murray Bridge
Councillor Michael Scott	- Alexandrina Council
Councillor Peter Smith	- Mid Murray Council
Mick & Lesley Fischer	
Lorraine Leese	

Faith Coleman
Councillor Steve Wilkinson - Mid Murray Council
Peter Harris - River Lakes and Coorong Action Group
Geoff Gallasch - CLLMM CAP, Shack Association
Bruce & Janette Brooks - Finniss Catchment Group
Elizabeth Tregenza - River Lakes and Coorong Action Group
Gloria Jones - River Lakes and Coorong Action Group
Rosa Hillam - HRA Health Rivers Ambassador
Clem Mason

- 2.2 Apologies:
Councillor Miles Hannemann – Tatiara District Council
Adrian Pederick – MP Member for Hammond
Glenn Rappensberg – CEO, Alexandrina Council

3. HOUSEKEEPING

- 3.1 It was decided at an informal meeting on the 6th of December that Shen Mann would act as Chair for today's Information Meeting. Today's meeting will pass general resolutions only eg. approval of Minutes of the last Meeting.
- 3.2 That this is an information meeting only, the Chair and Executive Group will be appointed at the AGM on Friday 15 February 2019, in the Alexandrina Council Chambers in Goolwa. This will be followed by the first Ordinary Meeting of Region 6 for 2019.
- 3.3 Welcome to all of our new Region 6 delegates.
- 3.4 Housekeeping: safety, toilets and catering.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Nil

5 GUEST SPEAKERS

Peter Mettam, Senior Operations Officer (DEW)

Andrew Beale, Director of River Murray Operations (DEW)

On the 'Coorong Summit and Goyder Expert Panel Reports' and the path forward.

Click here for a link to these reports <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/about-the-river/coorong-lower-lakes-murray-mouth>

Presentation sent through as a separate attachment.

Both reports have now been provided to the Minister Speirs. Minister Speirs and Minister Littleproud are interested in commencing implementation of actions in these plans.

Please find the Questions and Answers from this Session in **Attachment A**.

6 MINUTES

Minutes of meeting held on 19th October 2018 were accepted as correct.
Moved Councillor Vern Leng. Seconded by Keith Loeser.

Carried

7 BUSINESS ARISING

7.1 Action List – Attachment B

Mayor Brenton Lewis moved a vote of thanks to Shen Mann for the work she has done for Region 6.

Executive Officer Tracey Strugnell worked through the Action List.

7.2 Update - Meeting with Minister Speirs – 6th December 2018

Mayor Brenton Lewis – Rural City of Murray Bridge
Emma Bradbury – CEO MDA

Mayor Brenton Lewis and Emma Bradbury reported on this meeting. Emma Bradbury attended this meeting also.

The meeting went well, Minister Speirs reiterated that he was interested in progressing projects and initiatives like;

- the interconnector,
- trying to get the balance right between the science and the studies that have already been done,
- not reinventing the wheel,
- not interested in more studies and reports,
- appropriate triggers,
- use of the Adelaide Desalination plan with the support of green or cheaper energy.

7.3 Submission made to the Murray Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program. Copy sent to Minister Speirs.

8. REPORTS

8.1 CEO's Report – via phone conference

Emma Bradbury

It has been a very busy year across the basin. Emma has recently completed tours across the Northern Basin and South Australia. Emma referred to her report –see link below.

Meeting with Minister Speirs – 6th December 2018

Meeting with River Murray Operations, Ben Bruce – 6th December 2018

This meeting was an exchange of views from different perspectives across the Basin. A continuing call for an assessment standard with Local Government. That Basin officials and Ministers need to be looking at constraint and consultation standards.

MDA is preparing a paper which discusses seeking a role for Local Government at the Ministerial level to comment on large scale development planning approvals at the strategic planning level that may impact on the Murray Darling Basin.

Minutes of the last Board meeting, click on the October Minutes link: <http://www.mda.asn.au/about-us/board-meetings.aspx>

Recent Submissions – see Other Reports; <http://www.mda.asn.au/about-us/our-reports.aspx>

Submission to the Review of the Murray-Darling Basin Joint Governance Arrangements
Submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program
Submission to the Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Five-year assessment - Draft report.

Emma reflected on the difference in tone at the Ministerial level between now and 6 months ago. The Federal Minister Littleproud had a positive and enthusiastic tone in regard to the future of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

ACTION: Circulate more information from Min Co re the Murray Darling Basin Plan announcements once press releases come out.

Councillor Michael Scott enquired about the Region 6 Executive Meeting on the 6th of December. This was opportunistic during the tour of the South Australian Regions. Emma responded that this meeting was very useful prior to the meeting with Minister Speirs.

Keith Loeser asked whether in the future all of the Region 6 members could be invited to future Meetings

8.2 Executive Officer Report

- Letter Drafted to Minister Speirs re timely release of Coorong Summit Report – not sent as the report was released.
- Murray Darling Basin Authority Water Infrastructure Program Submission, and attendance at Murray Bridge Meeting.
- Peter Mettam and Andrew Beale of DEW confirmed to speak at 14th of December meeting on the Coorong Summit.
- Approached Peter Mettam in regard to holding a ‘local’ Coorong Summit.
- Have sought a partnership with Natural Resources SE and Friends of the Coorong to be partners in holding a ‘local’ Coorong Summit.
- Submitted content for November and December MDA e-newsletters.
- Attendance and support to Mayor Paul Simmons (Coorong DC) presenting to the Overabundant and Pest Species Parliamentary Inquiry in Meningie – 30th November.
- Attendance of informal Region 6 Executive meeting with Emma Bradbury on Friday 6th of December.

The CEO and EO reports were accepted. Moved Councillor Vern Leng, Seconded by Keith Loeser. Carried

9. RELEVANT MEDIA

- Please click here to access **Coorong Funding Update from Minister Speirs** released on Friday afternoon the 14th of December <https://departmentforenvironmentandwater.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/r/186D188B959A9BF02540EF23F30FEDED/2097C193798ABDCFF1E87EB810D8F10A>

- **The Ministerial Council met in Melbourne on Friday the 14th of December to discuss the next steps in the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. A comprehensive report covering the outcomes of this meeting can be accessed by clicking here** <https://www.mdba.gov.au/media/mr/murray-darling-basin-ministers-meet-melbourne>

The Sefton's report on the Murray Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program - Consultation for Additional Criteria can be accessed by clicking here

<https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/40641/documents/95245/download>

This report summarises the outcomes of the Murray Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program meetings held across the Basin, and the submissions received.

- **Murray Darling Basin neutrality test dispute meeting looms:** The controversial neutrality test that will underpin decisions on further water efficiency measures in the Murray Darling Basin will be determined at a meeting of state and federal water ministers in Melbourne on Friday. Click here for the full article <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/national/murray-darling-basin-neutrality-test-dispute-meeting-looms/news-story/725f9018ee63a6954ea7a9478cf94ae5>
- **Lake Albert-Coorong interconnector back on the agenda: Tony Pasin pushes idea as ministers David Littleproud, David Speirs visit** An interconnector between Lake Albert and the Coorong should be built "as soon as practical", federal MP Tony Pasin says. The idea became popular as a solution to the lake's salinity, a long-term problem for irrigators and drag on the economy, several years ago; but was opposed by the state government. Now that the Liberals were in power on North Terrace, Mr Pasin said, it was time the conversation began again. The interconnector and the problem of long-nosed fur seals in the Coorong fishery were among the issues Mr Pasin raised with federal Environment Minister David Littleproud, who flew in by helicopter on Friday to gain a first-hand perspective on the region. Click here for the full article <https://www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au/story/5803678/lake-albert-coorong-interconnector-back-on-the-agenda/>

ACTION: Consider organising a letter from Region 6 in regard to this.

- **Murray-Darling Basin Authority Communique – 5th December 2018** The Murray–Darling Basin Authority met on 4 and 5 December 2018 in Canberra to progress its work on the implementation of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. The Authority was mindful of the critical work in train and further efforts that are needed in coming months to make sure the Plan can deliver the sustainable future essential for the environment and communities that depend on our vital national river system. Click here for the full article https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/181205-Authority-communicue.pdf?utm_source=Communique07December2018_Murray-Dar2018-12-07&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=MDBAmedia
- **Coorong Summit Report released on 9th of November.** A report has been developed on the current conditions and issues affecting the Coorong, as well as a vision and recommendations for its future health and management. <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/about-the-river/coorong-lower-lakes-murray-mouth> A transcript of an interview

between Minister Speirs and David Bevan on 891 ABC Radio in regard to the release of this report is available.

- **Goyder Expert Panel Report.** The Goyder Institute for Water Research assembled an expert panel to report on the status of the ecological character of the Coorong South Lagoon and recommended actions to restore the wetland health. <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/about-the-river/coorong-lower-lakes-murray-mouth>
- **Various media around the MDBA Water Infrastructure Program Public Meetings** <https://www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au/story/5743904/water-infrastructure-program-may-offer-lifeline-to-coorong-farmers/#slide=2> <https://www.countrynews.com.au/2018/11/21/327862/concerns-ignored>
The media from meetings up river have a very different tone.
- **Getting the measure of water allocations** – Andrew Reynolds, Executive Director River Management, Murray–Darling Basin Authority <https://www.mdba.gov.au/media/mr/getting-measure-water-allocations>
- **Resignation of Matt Barwick from the National Carp Control Plan** <https://www.stockjournal.com.au/story/5782074/carp-herpes-support-flows-as-controversy-swamps-carpinator/?cs=257>

SA NEWS

Murray Mouth, Coorong, Lower Lakes, still not getting enough water

Tory Shepherd, State Editor, The Advertiser
December 7, 2018 8:00pm
Subscriber only



- [Murray carp may recover, return after herpes virus release](#)

Almost four million cubic metres of sand has been dredged from the Murray Mouth this year, compared to about 2.5 million at the same time last year.

Keeping the Murray Mouth open is vital to the river system's health, and one of the key goals of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is to deliver enough water to do that without dredging 95 per cent of the time.

For now, two dredges are operating 24 hours a day.

Dredging is done to make sure water flows in and out of the ocean, which allows salt to be flushed out and cooler, oxygenated water to come in and keep the Coorong healthy.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan has come under fire from all directions this year.

There have been allegations of water roting and theft, and a state royal commission has heard from a range of witnesses questioning the science behind the plan's aim to save 3200 gigalitres of water a year.

South Australia is at the end of the system and therefore the most vulnerable to reduced water. The Lower Lakes, the Coorong and the Murray Mouth are at the core of the concerns.

A month ago, a report from the Goyder Institute found the Coorong was "vulnerable" and risked losing key elements that made it an internationally important wetland. Algal blooms are affecting native plants, in turn affecting the number of waterbirds.

At the time, State Water Minister David Speirs said that while the Coorong had been on the brink of collapse during the Millennium drought, it was "slowly recovering".

But a parliamentary report released yesterday — the Inquiry into the management and use of Commonwealth environmental water — also heard that increased flows to keep the Murray Mouth open and the Coorong healthy increased the risk of flooding on private property as the water flowed through.

"There is no doubt that getting larger flows through the system is required to move the body of sand that sits at the Murray Mouth to keep the Murray Mouth open," Murray-Darling Basin Authority spokesman Carl Binning said in response to concerns about flooding, particularly from NSW landholders.

Rosa Merlino-Hillam from the River Lakes and Coorong Action Group said the Coorong was now looking "OK" but was still "in recovery".

Late yesterday, Mr Speirs took his federal counterpart David Littleproud on an aerial tour of the Coorong.

The tour comes ahead of a Ministerial Council meeting on the Murray next week.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1 Discussion of Coorong Summit Report & Goyder Expert Panel Reports.

Covered in this morning's presentation.

10.2 Work toward a 'local Coorong Summit'.

Tracey Strugnell will continue to work on this in the new year.

10.3 Is there an induction process for new Region 6 Delegates?

ACTION:

Begin Ordinary Region 6 Meeting on February 15th with this induction and overview content.

This will include:

- Revisit Strategic Planning process and outcomes.
- Revisit Communication Strategy process and outcomes.
- Background to the Murray Darling Basin Plan, the Region 6 Constitution, the different organisations involved.

Councillor Michael Smith asked whether new delegates across the regions could link up for an induction process.

Emma Bradbury said that renewal of the MDA Strategic Plan will be worked on at a meeting in February 2019. This could feed into new materials.

ACTIONS: Follow up induction materials with Emma Bradbury.

For this session it was agreed that the following speakers be approached to present at the February 15th meeting;

Monique White MDBA update

Michelle Campbell – Engagement Officer for the Environmental Water Holder

10.4 MDA Inter Regional Meeting

On Thursday 24 September, Region 4 resolved as follows;

Motion: That the executive writes to Regions 4, 5, and 6, inviting them to a joint meeting in Renmark to discuss Menindee proposals and the impact downstream.

Moved: Cr Jane MacAllister Second: Cr Tim Elstone CARRIED

In October 2018 Emma Bradbury emailed and spoke to the chairs of Region 4, 5 and 6 to start the ball rolling. It was determined that the meeting would be scheduled for early 2019.

This meeting is likely to be in Renmark. Councillor Vern Leng said it would be ideal to invite Regions 7 and 8 to this meeting.

Emma has asked me to join a phone conference on Monday 17th of December with Region 4 & 6 to organise the logistics of this meeting.

10.5 Format of the AGM.

Appointment of the Executive Group.

Appointment of the Chair.

Creation and appointment of the Vice Chair position?

Critical dates:

Distribution of AGM notification – by Friday January 11 2019

Closing of nominations for Region Executive – by Thursday February 7 2019

Distribution of Agenda – by Friday February 8 2019

Emma Bradbury reiterated that it is important that all elected delegates must support the nomination of a Chairman.

Shen Mann reiterated that members of the public are welcome to the AGM, and also to become private members of the MDA.

Emma Bradbury reiterated that private membership is not available to existing Councillors.

10.6 Schedule of guest speakers.

Suggestions:

Monique White MDBA update

Michelle Campbell – Engagement Officer for the Environmental Water Holder

Cane Aldridge – Goyder Report

Use of the Adelaide Desalination Plant. What does it mean in relation to the 450GL.

Professor Mike Young – MDB Water Audits

Faith Coleman – Ecologist, Coorong Trust

Organise a visit for all MDA Region 6 and Councillors to the barrages, Organise with Ann Liddell at Alexandrina Council.

10.7 Schedule of meetings for 2019.

Region 6 Ordinary Meetings - Third Friday of every second month

Friday 15th of February

Friday 19th of April - Good Friday

Friday 21st of June

Friday 18th of October

Friday 20th of December

Friday 16th of August

Region 6 Executive Meetings - First Friday of every second month

Friday 1st of February

Friday 2nd of August

Friday 5th of April

Friday 4th of October

Friday 7th of June

Friday 6th of December

ACTION: These dates will be confirmed at the AGM.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Inter Regional Meetings

Councillor Vern Leng said that we need to be considering further inter regional meetings. It is on the Executive Agenda for Region 6 to open dialogue about Region 6 hosting an inter-regional meeting.

11.2 Murray Darling Association Region 6

The date of MDA AGM is October 24th 2019, in Toowoomba, Qld.....

11.3 Region 6 continuity through Local Government elections

Councillor Michael Scott expressed concern that the Local Government election led to a dislocation of the Region 6 processes. He suggested that there needs to be an orderly transfer and continuity of processes. The Past Chairman of Region 6 is also the MDA Vice Chairman.

ACTION: Emma Bradbury said that the Local Government elections had highlighted the need to look at transitional arrangements;

- To look at this process going forward
- Region 6 is a stand out, allowing the appointment of appointed Executives on the committee has allowed some continuity
- The Board will turn its mind to this as a strategic issue
- All levels of Government find election periods challenging

Lorraine Leese asked whether use of an Immediate Past President position could be considered.

Keith Loeser asked whether an independent Chair could be appointed to provide that continuity?

Emma Bradbury said that the constitution does not preclude the appointment of Independent Chair. However the nominees for Chair do require the support of the relevant Council.

Councillor Tracy Hill asked about what other mechanisms of succession planning are in place? Shen Mann explained that the Executive Officer position, and the appointment of CEO's to the Region 6 Executive have assisted with transition.

ACTION: Emma Bradbury asked that these ideas be sent through to her in an email. All ideas to be emailed through Tracey.

9. NEXT MEETING: AGM followed by the Ordinary Meeting on Friday 15 February 2019, in the

Alexandrina Council Chambers in Goolwa.

10. CLOSE

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks Rural City of Murray Bridge for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 6 – Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong.

MDA Region 6 - Minutes Action List - as at 9 December 2018

Minute	Item	Details	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date	Notes	Review
Dec 2018	8.1	Circulate more information from Min Co re the Murray Darling Barin Plan announcements once press releases come out.	EO	Dec 2018		
Dec 2018	10.3	Incorporate induction content as discussed at 14 th December meeting into the Ordinary Meeting Agenda for 15 th February 2019	EO	Dec 2018		
Dec 2018	10.3	Request any relevant 'induction' materials from MDA	EO	Dec 2018		Complete
Dec 2018	10.7	Insert Schedule of Meetings for approval into the AGM Agenda for February 15th	EO	Dec 2018		
Dec 2018	11.3	Send all ideas re Region 6 continuity through Local Government elections through to Emma Bradbury.	EO	Dec 2018		Complete
Dec 2018 Feb 2018	6.2	<i>City of Victor Harbor</i> New Chair to jointly approach new CVH CEO with respect to membership of the MDA.	New Chair	2019	R6 marketing collateral being developed to support recruitment drive.	
Dec 2018		Update the Voting list in Membership folder	EO	Feb 15 2019		
Dec 2018 April 2018 April 2017	9.2	Lake Albert-Coorong Connector Draft a letter from the three Mayors stating the positivity around the announcement to look at the Lake Albert to Coorong Connector again	EO	TBC	Will potentially be reconsidered for investment by new Liberal State Government to address plight of Coorong South Lagoon. EO to advocate for further investigations via	This is address by Coorong Summit/Goyder Report



* Denotes Item Completed & will be removed next meeting

MDA Region 6 - Minutes Action List - as at 9 December 2018

Minute	Item	Details	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date	Notes	Review
					State Government consultation process.	
June 2018 Oct 2018	6.3	<p>Ideas for guest speakers and tours for future meetings</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monique White MDBA update - Monique White MDBA update, Michelle Campbell – Engagement Officer for the Environmental Water Holder - Jarod Eaton - Professor Mike Young - Salinity Management - Goyder re alternative water sources for urban areas i.e. desal & recycled - Local irrigator who has participated in water recovery/efficiency upgrades - Use of the Adelaide Desalination Plant. What does it mean in relation to the 450GL. - Professor Mike Young – MDB Water Audits - Faith Coleman – Ecologist, Coorong Trust - Focus on State issues - Focus on integrated water management i.e. utilisation of alternative water sources such as recycled stormwater and wastewater - Drought Impacts - Livestock Water Security - Gary Hera Singh – Lake & Coorong Fishery - MDBA Regional Engagement Officer to provide future presentation to MDA-R6 on SA's three supply/constraint projects. - <p>Tours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise a visit for all MDA Region 6 and Councillors to the barrages, Organise with Ann Liddell at Alexandrina Council. 	EO	As appropriate	Review appropriate time/topic to invite speakers that aligns with Strategic Directions.	DEW invited to Dec 2018 meeting re Coorong Summit Outcomes.
June 2018	6.4	<p>Coorong Summit</p> <p>EO to liaise with State Government re hosting a local consultation forum in collaboration</p>	EO	Report back October 2018	Offer has been extended to DEW – who have indicated willingness to work together	DEW invited to Dec 2018 meeting re Coorong Summit



* Denotes Item Completed & will be removed next meeting

MDA Region 6 - Minutes Action List - as at 9 December 2018

Minute	Item	Details	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date	Notes	Review
October 2018	6.1	with Coorong District Council once draft report has been released for public consultation. <u>Resolution</u> That Region 6 write to the Hon David Speirs MP, Minister for Water, expressing concern about a lack of timely community engagement and communication with respect to the outcomes of the Coorong Summit and request that, moving forward, a greater level of priority is given to proactive and regular community engagement.			to host local consultation events. Waiting on update re dates for consultation. Reports due for "imminent release" as at 4 October.	Outcomes.
August 2018	6.3	Future Inter-Regional Meetings Liaise with other SA Chairs re asking LGA to host future meetings – possibility two per year.	Cr Featherston	ASAP	MDA organising joint meeting of Regions 4,5 and 6 re Menindee Lakes to be held in Renmark in 2019.	Executive to progress.
June 2018	5.4	Council Briefings EO to brief RCMB and Coorong post-LG election. Note: proposal for tri-council induction tour of barrages. Liaise with Anne Liddell at Alexandrina Council.	EO	August 2018	Alexandrina – briefing undertaken on 2 October Murray Bridge – briefing date?	Regional Executive to discuss and organise.
April 2018 Aug 2018	6.3 7.4	Engagement Strategy - All MDA-R6 members to provide details to Tracey of industry & community stakeholder groups to be approached for Organisational Membership of MDA-R6 - Region name and branding adopted August 2018: "Murray to Mouth: Working together to secure a freshwater future for the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong". - Web content, promotional flyer and media release to be developed.	EO	Update in Dec 2018	EO to undertake recruitment drive in collaboration with Chair once new marketing material available.	
Feb 2018	4.2	Future of the Barrages Anne Liddell to provide regular updates on progress to each R6 Ordinary Meeting.	Anne Liddell/EO	Ongoing	Letter sent to Minister 3 August 2018. No reply as yet. Emma Bradbury and Cr Featherston due to meeting with Minister Speirs on 6 th Dec 2018 in response to MDA AGM Resolution 5.6.	Mayor Brenton Lewis to provide update on the Meeting with Minister Speirs attended with Emma Bradbury on 6 th December 2018.
Feb 2018	5.4	<u>Regional Secretariat Position Description / Task List</u>	EO	As time allows		



* Denotes Item Completed & will be removed next meeting

MDA Region 6 - Minutes Action List - as at 9 December 2018

Minute	Item	Details	Responsible Person	Target Completion Date	Notes	Review
		Tracey to work with Emma to develop standardised position description/task list for regional secretariats.				
Feb 2018	6.1	<p>Priorities from Strategic Directions Report</p> <p>EO to prepare Engagement Strategy (Priority 3), Scoping Briefs for Priorities 2a, 2b and 2d and a response to MDBA socio-economic data (Priority 4a)</p>	EO	Ongoing	Engagement Strategy presented at April 2018 meeting and branding proposal at August 2018 meeting (Priority 3). MDBA Chief Economist invited to inter-regional meeting on 11 July 2018 (Priority 4a).	Recommendation= focus on providing information & facilitating debate re water quality via State Government consultation on restoring health of Coorong.



* Denotes Item Completed & will be removed next meeting



Coorong Summit

Summary Report & Recommendations

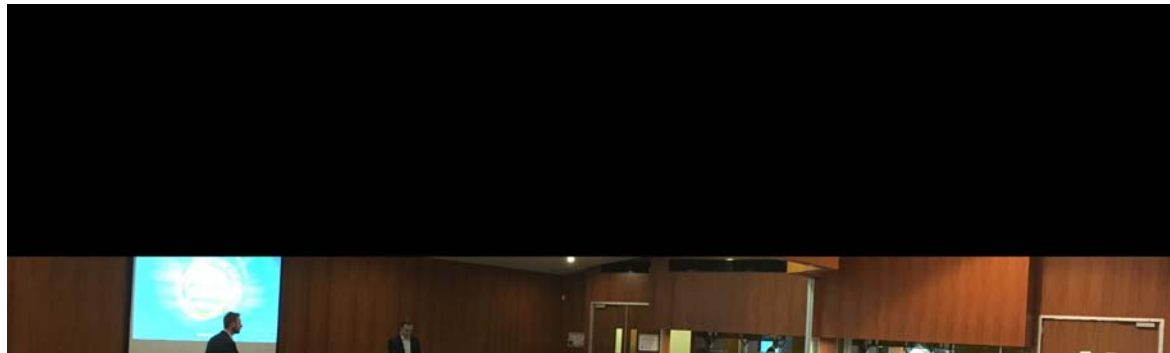


Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water



Coorong Summit

- 70+ representatives
 - Community groups
 - Traditional owners
 - Scientists
 - Water resource managers
 - Commonwealth/State/Local government



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water





Coorong Summit

- Expert presentations
 - Goyder expert panel
 - SE Flows Project
 - Water Quality, Ruppia & Algae, Ecology
- Minister Address
- Workshop Tasks:
 1. Establish a vision for the Coorong
 2. Provide recommendations to achieve vision, improve ecological character and build resilience.



Vision for the Coorong

We want the Coorong to return to being a beautiful landscape teeming with abundant and diverse populations of waterbirds, fish and plants. We want the Coorong to support the values of the Traditional Ngarrindjeri Owners and be an icon for South Australia and its visitors through supporting a strong tourism industry. We want management of the Coorong to not be rigid and must allow for variability in environmental and river operations conditions. It must also be managed at an ecosystem scale including the Murray Mouth, Lower Lakes and surrounding wetlands and more broadly and importantly within the Murray Darling Basin.



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water





Short Term Actions

- Promote the value and ownership of the Coorong through extensive consultation and engagement with local and indigenous (Ngarrindjeri) communities
- Undertake investigations and targeted experiments to understand nutrient sources, accumulation in sediments, cycling and options for removing algae from within the Coorong South Lagoon. Importantly as part of this is understanding the impact of water delivery operations on nutrient sources and composition
- Undertake investigations to determine the likely impacts of climate change on the Coorong ecosystem
- Promote the value of the Coorong through community education – it is the 'Kakadu of the South'



Short Term Actions

- Monitor the impact of management actions including from the South East for key attributes and components of the Coorong
- Undertake trials on the impact of water from the SE Drainage network system into the Coorong to lower salinity to see if this encourages a greater diversity and abundance of native species
- Develop an approach that integrates the management of flows using inflows from the River Murray, South East and Southern Ocean to export nutrients, maintain optimum conditions and assist rehabilitation of the southern Coorong
- Investigate and trial options for alternative habitat to support waterbirds (including migratory waders) in particular and other key biota.



Long Term Actions

- Develop an adaptive management approach to export nutrients, maintain optimum conditions and rehabilitate the southern Coorong
- Take a 'whole of ecosystem', not just southern Coorong approach to rehabilitation
- Investigate the feasibility of various infrastructure to manage water levels in the Coorong in line with current and future ecosystem needs that take into account likely changes as a result of climate change
- Fully implement the Basin Plan water savings and remove constraints across the Murray-Darling Basin to allow greater volumes of flows to reach the Coorong
- Implement appropriate management actions in line with recommendations from scientific investigations/trialled experiments.



Key Knowledge Gaps

- Investigate how to export nutrients and better understand the relationship between nutrient dynamics, salinity and turbidity
- Investigate the likely impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on the Coorong and Murray Mouth
- Understand the ecosystem dynamics/relationships between different biota and environmental processes and how they relate and affect one another.



Goyder Expert Panel

- Minister for Environment and Water requested the Goyder Institute to provide independent scientific advice
- Facilitated independent expert panel workshop with outcomes, recommended actions and next steps





Goyder Expert Panel

- Expert panel:
 - Professor Justin Brookes - water quality and algal expert
 - Professor Sabine Dittmann - invertebrate expert
 - Associate Professor David Paton - waterbird expert
 - Professor Michelle Waycott - aquatic plant and algal expert
 - Associate Professor Qifeng Ye - fish expert
-
- Contributors:
 - Dr Daniel Rogers - ecosystem
 - Dr Rebecca Quin - site condition
 - Dr Jody O'Connor - site condition
 - Dr Paul Dalby - facilitation



Goyder Expert Panel

- Key Questions:
 - Is the ecological character of the South Lagoon of the Coorong, as defined by the Ramsar Convention, currently being met?
 - What are the major risks to maintaining and restoring the ecological character into the future?
 - What are recommended actions that are required to maintain and restore the ecological character into the future?
- Short-, med- and long-term actions for restoring the ecological character of the South Lagoon of the Coorong
- Along with Summit, an important step towards a solution





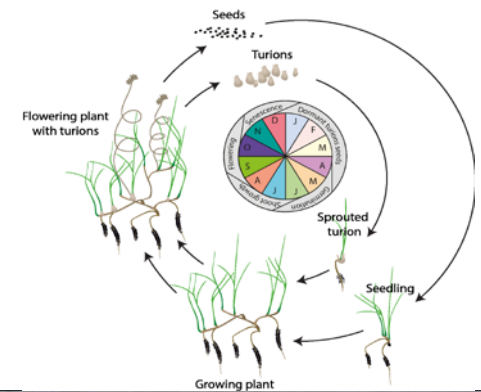
Is the ecological character of the South Lagoon of the Coorong, as defined by the Ramsar Convention, currently being met?

- Condition has declined significantly since listing & “Millennium drought”
- Partial recovery of some ecological components
- Some components of the South Lagoon have failed to recover – shorebirds, *Ruppia tuberosa* & foodwebs
- Out-of-balance – dominance of an “imposter”
- Vulnerable to disturbance
- Continues to support important ecological values & remains a wetland of international importance
- Recoverable, but requires a committed & adaptive approach



What are the major risks to maintaining and restoring the ecological character into the future?

- Ongoing eutrophication
 - Including a lack of understanding of nutrient dynamics, sources and sinks and ecosystem interactions
- Filamentous algae
 - Preventing completion of *Ruppia tuberosa* life-cycle
 - Anoxic and inaccessible mudflats
- Disturbance e.g. drought
 - Lack of *Ruppia* resilience - low seeds and turion densities
 - Flow on ecosystem effects
- Climate change
 - Reduced inflows
 - Sea-level rise
 - Increased water temperature



Goyder Expert Panel

"The key ecological features that make this system unique and valuable are still in place, including the north-south salinity gradient, the large areas of mudflat habitat, and the species of plants, invertebrates, fish and birds. However, the concentration, abundance and distribution of many parameters and species, and processes, have dramatically altered"



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Goyder Recommendations

1. Protect and increase waterbird populations by creating nurseries for aquatic plants within the South Lagoon and increasing habitat and food resources in the broader landscape
2. Undertake trials to shift the system from algal dominated to aquatic plant dominated
3. Improve our knowledge on nutrient cycling and how to maximise nutrient turnover into productive elements such as plants, invertebrates, fish and birds and incorporate knowledge into a response strategy
4. Undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment of the Coorong and implement climate adaptation activities for the region



Common Themes

- **Protect migratory water birds and replenish Ruppia**
 - Establish plant nurseries to replenish seedbank
 - Provide habitat within the South Lagoon and region
- **Nutrient dynamics**
 - Balance
 - Nutrient stripping
 - Nutrient export
- **Improved flows management**
 - Including understanding of SE Flows
 - Integrated Flow management
 - Water quality and water levels
- **Climate change management**
 - Reduced flows
 - Increased temperature



Common Themes

- **Importance of Ngarrindjeri and community involvement**
- **Promotion of the Coorong**
 - High ecological value
 - Tourism and economic benefits





Next Steps





**Government
of South Australia**

Department for
Environment and Water

Region 6 Murray Darling Association Meeting Friday 14th of December 2018

Questions and Answer Session post presentation from:

Peter Mettam, Senior Operations Officer (DEW)

Andrew Beal, Director of River Murray Operations (DEW)

On the 'Coorong Summit and Goyder Expert Panel Reports' and the path forward

Councillor Peter Smith referred to sea level rise over the barrages. Will we need to build a sea wall to stop degradation of the Lower Murray?

Andrew Beal responded that the MDBA has responsibility to maintain the barrages in a fit for purposed condition. There is a view that there is another 30-40 years before their will be a need for too much change. Andrew acknowledged that the opportunities to direct fresh water into the Coorong are becoming shorter, and sea water backflow into Lake Alexandrina are becoming more frequent. It is acknowledged that this is a result of diminished River Murray flows and sea level rise. There is a commitment under this project to understand these processes better.

Faith Coleman asked why the black ooze in the Southern Lagoon of the Coorong is not acknowledged, even though this has been well documented? She also asked why filamentous green algae in the Southern Lagoon of the Coorong is not adequately acknowledged in these reports.

Andrew Beal answered that there is an acknowledgement of the algae in the Southern Lagoon. He said the aim has been to keep the Southern Lagoon in a band of 60-100 parts per thousand to favour the Ruppia, and disadvantage the algae. There still is still a persistence in nutrient load in particular in the Southern Lagoon. Biota may be the best option to strip these nutrients that will then be flushed.

Faith said that translocation of macro- invertebrates is very labour intensive, and unlikely to be successful due to the current reactivity of the sediments.

Ian Mann of Region 5 asked whether the Lake Albert interconnector was still part of the discussion in these reports.

Andrew Beal said the original scope of this project idea was quite narrow looking at just salinity management of Lake Albert. The benefits and disadvantages of an interconnector on the Northern and Southern Lagoon were not looked at however. This may be looked at more systemically now, working through the concept looking at all of the potential effects.

Elizabeth Tregenza of the River Lakes and Coorong Action Group asked how wider consultation and peer review will occur on these reports.

Andrew Beal said that they were hopeful for some seed funding to implement their work in this area, which will include wider consultation. Giving everyone who was at the Summit as

well as those who weren't there will be given the opportunity to comment.

Councillor Vern Leng expressed concern about which scientists were consulted rather than others. Vern also expressed concern about the concentration on water birds, Ruppia, the RAMSAR area, and not sufficient focus on the hyper salinity of the Southern Lagoon, and broader issues.

Andrew Beal acknowledged that there are polarized views in the scientific and broader community about historic salinity levels and the paleo-ecology. He said the Coorong Summit Report is about envisaging a future for the health of the Coorong. It is our management of this system that will determine the future health of the Coorong. It is more helpful to focus on the future health of the Coorong, rather than focusing on what it was in the past. The birds are a large feature due to several international agreements, and also their habitat impacts in other parts of the world.

Faith Coleman said that there are many other descriptive reasons why the Coorong was listed as a RAMSAR area, not just the bird life.

Andrew Beal said that the environmental water on hand has improved the management of the River, Lakes and Coorong.

Lorraine Leese asked whether the Goyder Report should be defined as a work in progress, not to be all and end all.

Andrew Beal said that this report provides a snap shot in time, and the information that informs this report over time will change. We need action now, and targeted applied investigations that feed into management decisions.

Lesley Fischer was pleased that the interconnector was still being looked at. She said that nothing was done in the first study to look at the impacts on the Coorong, just Lake Albert. Leslie stated she was keen to see future consultation between the community and the Aboriginal communities be done altogether.