



Region 1 Ordinary Meeting

AGENDA

Location: AlburyCity Council, Robert Brown Room, 553 Kiewa Street, Albury

Time/date: 10.00am for 10.30am Friday 23 August 2019

Zoom:

1. **ATTENDANCE**
 - 1.1 Present
 - 1.2 Apologies
2. **WELCOME**
 - 2.1 Cr Thurley to welcome members and guests
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
4. **MINUTES**

Minutes of the previous [meeting](#) held on Friday 24 May 2019, in Albury NSW
5. **CEO's REPORT**
 - 5.1 CEO's reports [online](#)
 - 5.2 Chairman's Report (attached)
 - 5.3 MDA Board Meeting 388 [Minutes](#)
6. **GENERAL BUSINESS**
 - 6.1 Cap on water buybacks
 - 6.2 MDBA Memorandum of Understanding
 - 6.3 MDA Annual Conference
7. **PRESENTATION**
 - 6.1 Dr Lynette Bettio | Senior Climatologist - Climate Information Services

'Climate and water briefing for the MDB: current conditions, trends and outlook'.
7. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

Friday 22 November 2019
8. **CLOSE**

The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks AlburyCity Council for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 1.

DATE	16 July 2019	FIL REFERENCE	FIL19/00389
CONFIDENTIAL	No		
FURTHER ENQUIRIES	Cr David Thurley	PHONE	6023 8105
AUTHOR	Cr David Thurley		

On Tuesday 2 July 2019, I went to Shepparton where the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) was holding a Board meeting. At the conclusion of that meeting the Acting Chair Joanna Hewitt and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Murray Darling Association (MDA) and the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to allow for our continued cooperation and collaboration for another five years. The CEO's of the two organisations, Phillip Glyde and Emma Bradbury were also present.

On Thursday 4 July 2019, I attended the MDBA's peak bodies briefing in Canberra. There were more than 30 representatives in attendance.

Phillip Glyde opened the briefing by presenting the mid-year report card and forward agenda. The full report can be found at:

www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/basin-plan-report-card.

At the moment we are seven years into the 12 year implementation of the Plan (2012 – 2024) and many aspects of the Plan are behind schedule. All 33 water resource plans were due for completion by 30 June 2019 and the MDBA has 60 people working on accreditation of plans submitted. The hold up has been caused by the states not submitting plans and in this context NSW is well behind schedule and has been granted an extension until December 2019.

At the time of the determination, the Basin-wide sustainable diversion limit was 10,873 GL and this could be adjusted up or down by five per cent (approx. 543 GL). The assessment of supply projects has determined sustainable diversion limits can be adjusted up, so that 605 GL of water can remain available for communities. To ensure this water remains available for communities, a minimum of 62 GL of additional water savings through efficiency projects is required to pass the five per cent rule. At the moment less than 2GL has been recovered by efficiency measures.

The other major issue in the report card was compliance and a significant improvement was reported as a result of the appointment of Mick Keelty as the Northern Basin Commissioner and the actions taken by NRAR. Further work is required in Queensland and northern NSW. It was acknowledged that there is a low level of trust with government agencies. It should be noted that state governments are responsible for policing individual water use and the MDBA reports on collective water use by the states.

Floodplain harvesting is important and a great deal of effort is going into estimating what level of floodplain harvesting was occurring when the baseline diversion limit was established. New tools and

techniques will be used to monitor and license this additional use of water which has been largely unregulated to date.

Jody Swirepik gave an update on environmental watering and explained that the CEWO was squeezed out in 2018 – 2019 by other demands and could not deliver environmental. The CEWO will deliver water earlier in 2019 – 2020 and will therefore pay the costs and losses of delivery. A particular success mentioned was a fish flow from the Meehi River a Collarenebri. The NSW Government placed a protection order on this flow enabling it to reach Walgett and Brewarrina.

A summary of the work being done to understand the effects of climate on the Basin and the implementation of the Plan was given and the full report can be found at:

www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/climate-change-murray-darling-basin-plan-discussion-paper.

The final presentation by MDBA staff was by Dr Joe Davis who explained the issues of capacity shortfall and drought management. The lack of water coming down the Darling River means that all water must be delivered via the Murray and this causes problems because of the limited capacity of the Barmah Choke which can only deliver about 9,600ML/d whereas up to 15,000ML/D has been necessary to deliver sufficient water to Lake Victoria to meet downstream requirements. It was also stressed that the climatic outlook is poor with a southern frontal influence pushing any fronts south of the continent and unless there is high winter and spring rainfall, general security allocations will again be zero for the next irrigation season.

David Littleproud, the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management, has convened an independent panel to undertake an assessment of the social and economic conditions in the Basin. A panel of seven people led by Robbie Sefton has been established. The terms of reference given by the Minister have been considered and it is expected that the final terms will be approved before the end of July. The panel will issue an interim report in early December 2019 and the final report on 30 April 2020. The MDA is happy that this step has been taken but disappointed by the fact that we have been advocating for such an assessment for about two years.

The details of the terms of reference and other matters can be found at:

www.basin-socio-economic.com.au

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the report on Cr Thurley's attendance at the Murray Darling Basin Authority Board meeting in Shepparton on Tuesday 2 July 2019, and the Murray Darling Basin Authority's Peak bodies briefings held in Canberra on Thursday 4 July 2019.