



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

admin@mda.asn.au  
www.mda.asn.au  
T (03) 5480 3805  
ABN: 64 636 490 493

463 High Street  
P.O. Box 1268  
Echuca, Vic 3564

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 553 Kiewa  
Street  
P.O. Box 359  
Albury, NSW 2640

## Ordinary Meeting Region 10

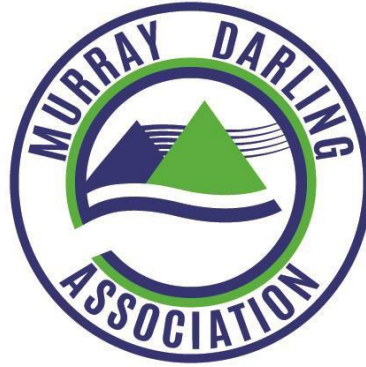
Warren Shire Council, Council Chambers  
115 Dubbo Street, Warren

Thursday, 11 June 2015  
10.00 am for a 10.30 am start

### AGENDA

1. **ATTENDANCE**
  - 1.1 Present
  - 1.2 Apologies
2. **WELCOME**
  - 2.1 Chair, Region 10 – Murray Wood
3. **REPORTS (attached)**
  - 3.1 Chief Executive Officer's Report to the Regions February/March 2015; Emma Bradbury CEO - MDA
  - 3.2 Summary of AGM Resolutions – 2014; Emma Bradbury CEO - MDA
  - 3.3 Policy on Unconventional Gas; Emma Bradbury CEO – MDA
4. **GENERAL BUSINESS**
  - 4.1 Review of the Constitution – Draft for review and feedback (attached)
5. **STAKEHOLDERS PRESENTATION**
  - 5.1 Commonwealth Environmental Water Officer – Ken Harrison
6. **NEXT MEETING**
7. **CLOSE**

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks  
Warren Shire Council for their support in  
hosting this meeting of Region 10*



# Chief Executive Officer's Report to the Regions February/March 2015

Prepared by: Emma Bradbury

Chief Executive Officer  
Murray Darling Association  
463 High Street  
Echuca Vic 3564

Phone: (03) 5480 3805  
Email: [e.bradbury@mda.asn.au](mailto:e.bradbury@mda.asn.au)  
Website: [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)

## 1. From the Chief Executive Officer's desk

What a busy quarter it has been. It seems like no time since I sat down to pen my last Report to the Regions in late November. Since then we have had Christmas, new year and all the mayhem and festivities that go with it. Now well into 2015, the preceding months and the year ahead remain as busy and dynamic as the last year has been!

## 2. Conference 2015

Planning for the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference and AGM is well under way. The conference will be in Berrigan on September 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, so save the dates.

The theme for this year's conference is "**Getting the Balance Right**".

The MDA has long stood for *conservation and sustainable development*...in fact, it's our by-line. So whether it is the balance between conservation and sustainable development; balancing the delivery of environmental outcomes with social and economic benefits; or even just our work/life balance – sustainability and resilience is all about getting the balance right!

If you have a particular speaker or topic you would be interested in seeing at the conference, please send your suggestions to [admin@mda.asn.au](mailto:admin@mda.asn.au)

## 3. Projects

With Adrian's continuing absence (we hope to see him back to some part time work in mid-March) we are continuing to complete, and work on our project capacities.

Thanks must go to Owen Dunlop and Stacey Staunton-Latimer, project partners for their work in stepping up during Adrian's absence to launch that Creative Catchment Kids 2014 publications, and deliver the final NRM Education Program requirements in 2014.

## 4. Staff Matters

There have been some changes to staffing of the MDA in recent months.

Ms Linda Deans, Administration Assistant Albury office has left after almost a year of hard work and commitment to the goals and objectives of the association. Unfortunately, with work in the Albury office necessarily diminished, and the organization needing to restructure accordingly, the role of admin assistant was made redundant early in 2015. We thank Linda for all her hard work and wish her well in the future.

The process to recruit a Business Development Officer, Echuca based has commenced. This role will be crucial as the organization continues to grow and meet demand.

March Update –

Adrian Wells remains on medical leave, and has advised that owing to ongoing health issues, he is unlikely to return to work. We wish Adrian well with his continuing treatment.

Mr Stan Gibney has joined the team in the role of Finance Manager. Stan brings a wealth of experience, having worked internationally in finance management; internal and external audit; and governance processes across a range of industries. Most recently, Stan has spent 17 years in the role of Business Manager, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority in Shepparton.

I am delighted to have Stan on board. Already a valued member of our small but growing team, Stan has a full worksheet for the year ahead as we continue to capture and consolidate the benefits of stronger financial management practices.

## 5. Murray Darling Foundation

Foundation Chairman Mr Brian Grogan OAM continues to work hard on Foundation matters.

Brian has made presentations at

- Region 3 Meeting in Swan Hill on November 27<sup>th</sup> to present the 2014 award for the MDF's Albert Heslop Memorial Travelling Bursary to Nathan Free of Tresco.
- Region 5 meeting in Renmark on December 1st at which he made a presentation promoting the travelling bursary which is sponsored by McArthur Management. Although in its sixth year, the bursary has received no applications from South Australia.
- The MDA Board Meeting in Swan Hill on February 6<sup>th</sup>, to ensure that the board remain informed and up to date on matters of interest to the foundation, and to maintain close working ties.

The Foundation Committee is due to meet and dates for the next meeting will be forwarded as soon as they are available.

### March Update

Brian has announced his resignation from the chair of the committee. With Adrian no longer at work, and no meetings held since July last year, the current committee is no longer active.

Cr Oscar Aertssen, Chairman R2 has taken the position of Interim Committee Chair. He is currently taking expressions of interest for positions on the Foundation Committee, to be appointed by the board at the AGM.

## 6. Meetings – external

### **The Hon Bob Baldwin – Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment**

#### **Mr Neil Andrews, Chairman Murray Darling Basin Authority**

Monday 02 Feb 2015, The Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury and National Cr Greg Toll were invited to travel to Shepparton to meet with newly appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment The Hon Bon Baldwin MP, and with the incoming Chair of the Murray Darling Basin Authority, Mr Neil Andrew.

While in Shepparton we participated in a meeting of community stakeholders, convened by the Hon Sharman Stone MP, Member for Murray – and later attended a dinner for industry leaders within our sector.

At both meetings, Mr Andrews emphasized a commitment to continuing consultation with the MDA and the community more broadly; and Mr Baldwin was quite specific in his commitment to the implementation of the Basin Plan.

We were appreciative of the opportunity to meet with both men so early in their respective tenures, and emphasized the importance of ensuring that in implementing the plan, we are able to ensure a balance of environmental, social and economic benefits.

#### **The Hon Craig Knowles farewell visit**

Craig Knowles and Barry Hart, Outgoing Chairman and current board member respectively of the MDBA visited the Echuca office in January.

Mr Knowles was effusive in his praise and encouragement of the MDA's achievements

over the past 12 months. He noted the obvious hard work by the boards, and recognized the commitment to re-establishing the MDA's clear direction.

Both men commended the MDA on its new Echuca office and central presence in the basin, and Mr Knowles counselled that the journey to achieve our goals is 'a marathon...not a sprint'.

### **Senator John Madigan**

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb we traveled to Deniliquin to attend a meeting organized by the Southern Riverina Irrigators at which Senator John Madigan was the guest on a Regional Listening tour for messages for Canberra. We presented alongside RAMROC, and encouraged support from the crossbench in pursuit of the following objectives:

- a) That trade of environmental water needs to be simplified to allow greater re-investment in infrastructure using money from the sale of environmental water, and to ensure access to cost effective water by our food producers
- b) A cap on how much the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) can reacquire in pursuit of the Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs)
- c) That there needs to be a strengthening of focus in the implementation of the Basin Plan to provide equal weighting to delivering social and economic benefits to communities. Sustainability and environmental requires resilient communities, cost effect food production, healthy agriculture and strong regional economies in order to deliver environmental outcomes.

These messages were well reflected in Senator Madigan's speech to the senate the following week, which can be viewed by clicking on the link below.

<http://ourriversourfuture.net/2015/02/12/abbott-must-act-on-the-murray-darling-basin-plan>

### March Update

#### **Ms Lisa Chesters MP** Labor MP and Federal Member for Bendigo

Last week, Ms Chesters visited Region 2, and along with Cr Greg Toll and myself met with

- Gannawarra Shire Mayor Neville Goulding, CEO Jason Russel and R3 chair Cr Oscar Aertssen
- Wakool Shire Mayor Neil Gorey, GM Bruce Graeme, and director Gary Kerr
- Farmer and irrigator John Lolicato, and

To get a better understanding of issues facing our basin communities.

She also toured the Kagome processing plant in Echuca and discussed issues of the impact of water prices, and logistics on growers and manufacturing

## **7. In brief - updates**

### **7.1. Review of the Water Act 2007**

The Panel has now presented its report to the (then) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Senator Simon Birmingham.

The full report can be downloaded from

[Report of the Independent Review of the Water Act 2007](#)

The summary of conclusions and recommendations to be downloaded from

[Report of the Independent Review of the Water Act 2007 – Conclusions and Recommendations](#)

### **7.2. New website**

The launch of our new website is getting ever closer with an anticipated launch date now looming for mid-March.

### **7.3. Commitment to Albury**

Following a review into operational requirements at all sites, the MDA has resolved to accept an offer by Albury City Council of office space located in the Albury City Council offices building. The suite is modern, spacious and cost effective, ensuring that the MDA will continue its long standing and strong connection with the Albury. The offices are located on the third floor, next door to RAMROC and will serve to strengthen already solid ties with our local government partners. We thank the Albury City Council, Mayor Kevin Mack and GM Mr Frank Zaknich for their support in this move.

### **7.4. Social and economic impacts survey**

Members are reminded to complete their survey online. The survey will close in mid-March.

March Update – This survey has now closed, and that data is being collated and assessed by the MDBA. A report on the survey will be distributed in due course.

### **7.5. Governance**

The board and executive are continuing to actively pursue improvements in governance processes, to strengthen compliance, and to enhance accountability and reporting processes.

#### **Review of the Constitution**

The review of the constitution is continuing on schedule with a draft currently being prepared to go before the board at the end of March.

## **8. From the Regions**

The following region meetings have recently been held

Region 3	November 27, 2014	Swan Hill
Region 2	November 19, 2014	Mathoura
Region 5	December 1, 2014	Renmark
Region 6	Jan 30, 2015	Tailem Bend

The following regions have date savers for

Region 5	March 2, 2015	Waikerie
Region 2	April 24, 2015	Shepparton
Region 1	April 17, 2015	Albury

We are all very excited looking forward to the launch of the new website to enable everyone to access date savers, agendas and minutes on the MDA website.

#### News

Region 5-Chairman Mike Fuller announced his resignation for personal reasons. The MDA thanks Mike for his short but valuable contribution to the board, which has been strong and active. We also acknowledge his ongoing support of Region 5.

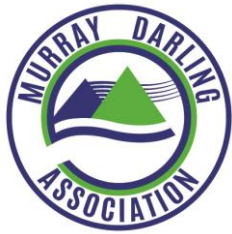
Region 6 – At its January meeting Region 6 resolved unanimously that *MDA R6 did not support the construction of another lock in the lower River Murray - Lock 1 to The Barrages.*

#### 9. Upcoming Events

For any upcoming events in your region that you would like distributed, please contact Sandra at [admin@mda.asn.au](mailto:admin@mda.asn.au)

Until the next report...

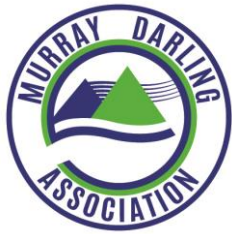
Emma Bradbury  
Chief Executive Officer



### SUMMARY OF AGM RESOLUTIONS-2014

<b>Motion No.</b>	<b>Region No.</b>	<b>Motion</b>	<b>Letter Sent To</b> (an annual report was included for non-members)	<b>Date Sent</b>
1	6	“That the Murray Darling Association write to the Murray Darling Basin Authority requesting that urgent action be taken to develop a strategy to effectively manage and mitigate the impact of the predicted Fur Seal population increase in Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and The Coorong which is predicted to end professional fishing in those areas within five (5) years.”	Mr Neil Andrew Chairman Murray Darling Basin Authority  The Hon Ian Hunter MLC Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister for Water and the River Murray Minister for Climate Change  The Hon Michelle Lensink MLC Shadow Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation Shadow Minister for Water and the River Murray  Mr Frank Tuckwell, Chairman, R 6 Mr Peter Smith, Secretary, R6	26/3/15
2	2	“That the Murray Darling Association write to the Federal Minister for the Environment, the Federal Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and the Secretary of the Federal Department of the Environment advocate the continued construction of adequate water storage facilities within the Murray Darling Basin in order to mitigate the effects experienced during the millennium drought and any future drought period and that will continue to support both effective environmental management and the irrigation required to sustain our food production sectors within the Basin.’	Hon Greg Hunt MP Minister for the Environment  Hon Bob Baldwin MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment  Cr Greg Toll National President, MDA Chairman, R2  Cr Ian Moon Murray Shire  Cr Jim Howard Nerranderra Shire	26/3/15
3	2	“That the Murray Darling Association write to the Murray Darling Basin Authority to recommend that water surplus to environmental requirements be made available for temporary trade for irrigation purposes within the region from within which the water savings have	Mr David Papps Commonwealth Environment Water Holder  Hon Greg Hunt MP Minister for the Environment  Hon Bob Baldwin MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment	26/3/15





Motion No.	Region No.	Motion	Letter Sent To (an annual report was included for non-members)	Date Sent
Cont...		been identified.”	Mr Neil Andrew Chairman Murray Darling Basin Authority  Cr Greg Toll National President, MDA Chairman, R2	
4	6	“The Murray Darling Association write South Australian Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation and the Secretary of the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources requesting that an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) be commissioned on the construction of a connector FROM Lake Albert TO The Coorong for flow between Lake Albert and the Coorong in order to substantiate the findings of a recent scoping study into the connector.”	The Hon Ian Hunter MLC Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister for Water and the Murray River  Mr Neil Andrew Chairman Murray Darling Basin Authority  Hon Michelle Lensink MLC Deputy State Leader in the Legislative Council Shadow Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Shadow Minister for Water and the River Murray  Mr Frank Tuckwell Chairman, R 6  Mr Peter Smith Secretary, R6	27/3/15
6	2	“That the Murray Darling Association write to the Victorian Minister for Water, the Victorian Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries requesting further investigation be conducted into the cost sharing arrangements between State and Local Government for the ongoing maintenance of levees, and that Local Government be provided with an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in determining the allocation of that cost burden prior to the finalisation of the Draft Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy.”	Hon Lisa Neville MP Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  Secretary Adam Fennessy Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning  Cr Greg Toll Campaspe Shire National President, MDA Chairman, R2  Cr Oscar Aertssen Gannawarra Shire  Cr Ed Cox Moira Shire	27/3/15



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## COMMUNICATION REPORT

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**ISSUE:** Policy on Unconventional Gas

**DISTRIBUTED TO:** MDA Board Members

**REPORT REFERENCE:** MDA006

**FROM:** Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury

**DATE:** Monday, 13 April 2015

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes  No

**TABLED** Read Only  Decision Required

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### Purpose

To inform the Board of the status of implementing Motion 7 – Policy on Unconventional Gas, as resolved at the 2014 AGM.

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### Background

In response to continuing growth in the coal seam gas sector, the MDA resolved to adopt a basin-wide policy position on unconventional gas. Many of our regions conducted research, sought expert opinions and presentations and consulted with their communities during 2014 to better understand the issues. The matter was discussed and explored at region meetings, with regions collaborating and sharing resources to develop a position that reflected the interests of all regions. As an outcome of the work done in 2014, the MDA adopted a policy position at the 2014 AGM, on a unanimous vote.

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### Current Status

That the Murray Darling Association adopts, as policy, the following statements regarding Unconventional Gas.

Definition: Unconventional Gas is found in highly compact rock or coal beds and requires a specific set of production techniques.

“That the Murray Darling Association:

- a. Will seek to have a moratorium placed on any further Unconventional Gas activity in any Basin that may be interconnected with the Murray Darling Basin on valuable arable land and until a solution is agreed upon of how to avoid salt mobilization.
- b. Will oppose the mining and exploration of Unconventional Gas, including the practice of

fracking, except where adequate guarantees based in science can demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on the aquifers and ground water storage environment and on the quality of water contained in those aquifers and ground water storages.

- c. Will always be focused on the environment and local communities in pursuing this policy.
- d. Affirms that agricultural land is a vital and important asset and must be protected from any activities that compromises its productive capacities,
- e. Affirms that ground water is a vital and important asset and must be protected from any activity that might compromise its quality.”

### **Consolidated submission from Region 2**

Des Bilske/Trina Thomson

**Carried**

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### **Future Actions**

This position/statement will be developed and expressed as a policy within the MDA’s broader policy framework, and distributed to all regions.



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## Discussion Paper

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**ISSUE:** MDA Governance Model review

**DISTRIBUTED TO:** MDA Member Councils

**REPORT REFERENCE:** EB008 (DP)

**FROM:** Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury

**DATE:** Wednesday, 6 May 2015

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes  No

**TABLED** Read Only  Response Required

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### Purpose

To seek feedback and comment from member councils on the proposed governance model for the Murray Darling Association.

The proposed governance model seeks to enable

- a) a stable succession plan, capturing and retaining the knowledge and experience of our current board
- b) the development and implementation of a Corporate Plan to articulate the strategic direction of the organisation and provide clear direction into the future
- c) The delivery of stronger, skills based financial, corporate and compliance oversight of the Association
- d) Enhanced value to members through clarity of purpose and structured advocacy capacities.

The proposed governance model will enable the MDA to deliver strong regional representation, supported by an organisation demonstrating sound governance delivering financial accountability, clear strategic direction, corporate compliance and the capacity for growth and development.

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### Background

In 2012 the MDA identified a number of flaws in its governance, financial management and operational delivery.

In 2013 membership numbers fell, cash reserves diminished, key stakeholders were disengaging, of the Foundation was struggling to meet its obligations under the Rules.

In February 2014 the MDA resolved that the organisational management of the MDA required change, endorsing in-principal a proposed Change Management Plan.

In May 2014, the board employed a new CEO, who was tasked to review current operational practices and governance arrangements in order to deliver required change.

In September 2014, the board resolved as follows at its meeting 341

*Item 6.4 Constitution*

*Constitution - Update and Compliance*

*As per earlier resolution of the board, the Constitution is currently under review for compliance and operability. MDA is in discussions with Russell Kennedy lawyers. Propose that the following time line and actions be considered*

*Date Action*

*14/10/2014 Notify membership at AGM of review. Call for input.*

*30/05/2015 Draft to board for approval*

*10/06/2015 Approved draft distributed to membership for feedback*

*30/07/2015 Board to consider recommendations*

*30/08/2015 Final draft circulated to membership for adoption at 2015 Conference*

*Motion: That the above action plan and time line be adopted.*

*Harris/Oliver - carried*

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## **Current Status**

Actions already undertaken in 2014/15 by the current Board in support of the change management process have included:

- Commissioned a review of the constitution – RK Lawyers working with MDA to develop the draft.
- Re-engaged the regions
- Identified a need to plan for orderly succession
- Articulated time limits they want, both individually and collectively, to serve on the board. Most current board members have identified that they each want to hand over to new, younger members in the coming 12 to 18 months, with a number already having foreshadowed their retirement.
- RK Lawyers have advised that it will be appropriate for the adoption of the proposed governance model that have board approval as a component of the development of the draft constitution.

At the board meeting held 01 May 2015, strong support was indicated for the above proposal, however it was requested that further opportunity be provided for board members to discuss the proposal with their regions, and member councils.

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## **Proposal**

It is proposed that the MDA adopts a governance structure that is consistent with the capacity to deliver on the core objectives of the Association, as follows:

- a) Board of Directors – responsible for oversight of governance; compliance; risk management; strategic direction; resourcing and financial accountability; and succession planning.
- b) The Committee of Regional Chairs (CoRC) – responsible for region meetings, advocacy, community engagement, basin related issues, representation etc.

### **The Board of Directors**

- i) A Regional Chair representing Victoria
- ii) A Regional Chair representing NSW
- iii) A Regional Chair representing SA
- iv) A Regional Chair representing QLD
- v) A representative from the farming and irrigation sector
- vi) A representative from the environmental sector
- vii) A representative from the business and economic development sector
- viii) The Chair of the Foundation committee

The makeup of this board has several advantages

- a) A majority of board members are regional chairs, ensuring the strongest influence at board level is from the membership
- b) A position on the board will be represented by the Foundation, ensuring a stronger alignment there
- c) Three industry representative positions ensures a more diverse perspective
- d) A smaller board is more manageable and more affordable
- e) Targeted eligibility criteria will provide the opportunity for a competitive process and facilitate a strong mixture of skill level and perspective

### **The Committee of Regional Chairs (The CoRC)**

The proposed CoRC will have the same composition and responsibilities as the current board has now regarding regional representation; managing the regions; providing guidance to the organisation; and setting the advocacy agenda.

The Chair of the CoRC will continue to represent issues at federal level on matters of policy and position, with the state chairs providing representation at state and regional level. It is envisaged that the CoRC will need to continue to meet at least 1-2 times a year, run the conference agenda etc.

The CoRC will not have responsibility for governance matters, reducing potential for conflict, and strengthening the capacities of the chairs to act solely in the interests of their local regions.

*It will be the primary role of the CoRC in the first year under the new constitution to provide stability, guidance and knowledge to the new board, to ensure a strong and stable transition and to make sure that the knowledge and experience is handed on, not lost to the organisation.*

If the MDA does not immediately begin planning for, and communicating with the membership on an effective transition management plan the organisation risks a catastrophic failure. It is not recommended that the association simply notify the membership and stakeholders when the current board are ready to leave. The Board must plan for an orderly transition, and bring the membership and stakeholders along on that journey.

The MDA will be more likely to attract quality candidates if they can see there is a strong and orderly transition plan, and that they will be supported through a structured process as they get up to speed. Without a transition plan, new recruits risk being overwhelmed, or set up to fail.

An effective succession plan will be an outstanding legacy of the current Board, and establish a solid foundation for the future of the association - whereas failure to plan may be a plan to fail.

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### **Future Action**

It is requested that the board member councils review the proposal, and provide comment and feedback. Your response is requested by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May, to facilitate timely progress of the Constitution review. Please forward all feedback to [ceo@mda.asn.au](mailto:ceo@mda.asn.au), or call Emma Bradbury on 0429 905 017 for further information.