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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Local government addresses Basin Ministers

Over 100 councils from across the Murray-Darling Basin were represented by 3 peak bodies at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in Mildura on Thursday.

National peak body for local government the Murray-Darling Association, representing over 100 councils across all 4 states of the Basin joined forces with regional peak bodies. The Murray River Group of Councils, and Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils representing 8 and 18 councils respectively, to press the case for local government to have an enduring seat at the Ministerial Council in an advisory capacity.

“It is in the interest of all governments and our Basin communities for local government, via the MDA and its member councils and groups to have the means and the opportunity to participate in the development of policy and decisions that impact our communities as decisions are being made,” MDA National President Cr David Thurley said in his address. “As the third level of government in Australia, and the one most directly connected to the people we serve, we are uniquely positioned to leverage local knowledge to develop solutions and deliver balanced outcomes. Local government is not a community group, it is Australia’s third level of government.”

Local government, Ministers, industry and community representatives at the round table all agreed that “failing to land the Plan” was simply not an option. All levels of government, community and industry must continue to work collaboratively to deliver on the investment in our in the Nation’s health and productivity that is the Basin Plan.

The MDA also reaffirmed the need for balanced outcomes in the implementation of the Plan, ensuring neutral or positive social and economic impacts while maintain a healthy river system.

Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury said “In measuring the social and economic impacts across the Basin in 2017 and beyond, it is essential that governments and the MDBA are properly equipped with the tools required to ensure integrity of data, and community confidence in the findings.”

“Recent reports released in Victoria including those by the GMID Water Leadership Group, and the Victorian Governments *Social and Economic impacts of the Basin Plan in Victoria* report are hard hitting and evidence based. They provide essential data the economic impacts particularly, and should be replicated in the other states,” she said.

“That work must be further supported by a rigorous and repeatable Basin Plan impacts evaluation framework that can distinguish short term and one off impacts from the underlying performance of the Plan for use by all levels of government and the MDBA, to better understand the positive and negative social and economic impacts on our local communities right across the Murray-Darling Basin.” Mr Bradbury added.

In 2016 the MDA developed a project proposal for the development of a Basin Plan Implementation Impacts Evaluation Framework. Local government will continue to press the development of the Basin Plan evaluation framework, and for an enduring seat at the Ministerial Council in an advisory capacity.



Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP with Emma Bradbury, MDA Chief Executive Officer and Cr David Thurley, MDA National President. Ministerial Council Mildura 2017



Emma Bradbury, MDA Chief Executive Officer, The Hon Lisa Neville, Victorian Water Minister and Cr David Thurley, MDA National President. Ministerial Council Mildura 2017



Emma Bradbury, MDA Chief Executive Officer and Cr David Thurley, MDA National President address the Ministers to press the case for local government to have an enduring advisory role in informing the decisions that impact our basin communities. Ministerial Council Mildura 2017