



Board Meeting 407 MINUTES

19 April 2021

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

Contents

1.	Attendance	3
1.1	Present.....	3
1.2	Apologies	3
1.3	Declarations.....	3
2.	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	4
3.	Reports	4
3.1	Chairman’s Report.....	4
3.2	Chief Executive Officer’s Report.....	4
3.3	Finance Reports.....	5
4.	Correspondence	5
4.1	Incoming (refer to Attachment 4.1)	5
4.2	Outgoing (refer to Attachment 4.2)	6
5.	Business Arising	7
5.1	Board Resolution Register	7
5.2	Project Funding Applications Update	7
6.	General Business	7
6.1	Ravensworth Agricultural Company Processing Plant Proposal (confidential item).....	7
6.2	MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program.....	8
6.3	Membership and Engagement	8
6.4	Report for Delegates.....	9
6.5	Communication and Briefing Reports	9
6.6	MDA Proposed Name Change Consultation Report.....	9
7.	National Conference.....	10
7.1	Draft AGM Motions	10
7.2	Draft 2020/21 Annual Report	10
7.3	2022 National Conference Submission.....	10
8.	CEO Performance Appraisal and Remuneration Review (confidential)	11
9.	Meeting Close.....	11

Meeting Commencement

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9:30am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Attendance

1.1 Present

Delegate	Council	Region
Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Bronwyn Thomas	Federation Council	Region 2
Cr Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council	Region 5
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr Brian Lockyer	Barunga West Council	Region 8
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr Craig Davies	Narromine Council	Region 10A
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Shire Council	Region 11
Mayor Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Peter George	M&S Group	Treasurer
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO
Sharolyn Taylor	MDA	Executive Assistant
James Marshall (9:30am – 10:59am)	MDA	Policy Officer
Nathan Bicknell (9:30am – 10:59am)	Region 6	Executive Officer

1.2 Apologies

Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Region 7
Cr Phyllis Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10

MOTION

(Cr John Campbell / Cr Brian Lockyer)

That the apologies be received and noted.

CARRIED

1.3 Declarations

Cr David Thurley – declared a conflict of interest in item 7.3 and advised he will not vote on the item

CEO – declared a direct interest in item 8

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

MOTION

(Cr Brian Lockyer / Mayor Craig Davies)

That the minutes of MDA Board Meeting 406 held on 20 February 2021 be accepted as an accurate record. **CARRIED**

MOTION

(Cr Melissa Rebbeck / Cr John Campbell)

That the Inland Rivers Network Briefing Paper be included on the next meeting agenda. **CARRIED**

3. Reports

3.1 Chairman's Report

The Chair attended the MDBA Climate Resilience Summit, as a result, two of the speakers (Francis Chew -CSIRO and Rod Hillman - EcoTourism Australia) are presenting at the MDA Conference.

3.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report

The CEO tabled her report including that there has been a lot of time out of the office focusing on engagement and delivering the Basin Communities Leadership Program northern basin workshops which were transformative. The workshops were well attended with diverse groups of people including Indigenous, community leaders, cotton farmers, environmental interests, with feedback exceeding all expectations of the program's intent. A submission has been made to the MDEDP R3 grant funding to continue the program for another 12 months.

The MDA team was commended for contributing to the nine project submissions (\$7.8M) to the MDEDP R3, Destination NSW and BBRFR2, which are all designed to benefit basin communities.

It is also fantastic to see new members coming on board as MDA members and commended Mayor Davies for his work in region 10A, and we are seeing some positive results from this tour.

Board queries:

MDBA Climate Summit Key Outcomes: the MDBA has advised a follow up meeting will be scheduled in the near future to discuss future actions, as there is a need to nationalise water reform and develop an action plan to prepare for climate change which is an area the MDA can advocate to the MDBA for.

Cr Rebbeck expressed interest in attending any future summits.

MOTION

(Cr Melissa Rebbeck / Cr Thurley)

That the MDA write to the MDBA:

1. Recognising that escalating impacts of climate change are placing additional pressures on Basin governments and communities to achieve ongoing national water reform.
2. Encourage MDBA to continue the work started at the Climate Resilience Summit to work together with Basin governments and communities to devise an integrated strategy to address the impacts of climate change on water reform.
3. Encourage the MDBA and Basin Government to remain committed to the full and timely implementation of the Basin Plan.

CARRIED

ACTION: The motion be circulated as a flying minute for the Board's confirmation.

MOTION

(Mayor Samantha O'Toole / Cr Melissa Rebbeck)

That the CEO's report be noted.

CARRIED

3.3 Finance Reports

The Treasurer provided the reports for February and March 2021 which will require further work including the BCLP program reconciliation in preparation for the annual audit.

MOTION

(Peter George/ Cr Peter Raison)

That the 31 March 2021 finance reports be redistributed once the adjustments have been made and the accounts have been audited.

CARRIED

4. Correspondence

4.1 Incoming (refer to Attachment 4.1)

Date	Received From	Subject
14 February 2021	Minister for Resources, Water & Northern Australia	National Conference attendance and response to MDA motions
15 February 2021	National Water Grid Authority	Opportunity to meet to discuss motion 5.15
22 February 2021	Inland Rivers Network	Macquarie-Castlereagh and Gwydir valleys Briefing Paper
25 February 2021	Mildura Rural City Council	Notification of MDA Delegate
12 March 2021	Coonamble Shire Council	Confirmation of membership
12 March 2021	LGA SA Legal	MDA Proposed Name Change (confidential)
24 March 2021	DELWP	NSW Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Project – Optimising the Murrumbidgee River – Yanga Lake
13 April 2021	DELWP	Easter Flows Murray River
14 April 2021	DPIE	Groundwater Protection

4.2 Outgoing (refer to Attachment 4.2)

Date	Issued to	Subject
3 February 2021	The Hon Michael McCormack MP	MC20-009748 - water policy and water infrastructure
18 February 2021	Water NSW	Proposed Coal Seam Gas Exploration and Extraction in Western NSW
19 February 2021	Bogan Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership
23 February 2021	Bogan Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership, Western Weirs Program
23 February 2021	Coonamble Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership, position on unconventional gas exploration
23 February 2021	Gilgandra Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership, Western Weirs Program
23 February 2021	Inverell Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership
23 February 2021	Warrumbungle Shire Council	Murray Darling Association Membership
26 February 2021	Campbelltown City Council	MDA Proposed Name Change
2 March 2021	Wentworth Shire Council	Letter of Support Wentworth Shire Council Community Space Civic Centre Project
22 March 2021	Member Councils	Murray Darling Association Membership Renewal
23 March 2021	The Hon Keith Pitt MP	Correspondence re: Water Efficiency Program (WEP)
23 March 2021	LGA SA Legal	Proposed Name Change Response (confidential)
24 March 2021	Mayor Al Karanouh	Re: Murray Darling Association Membership
6 April 2021	Barunga West Council	Murray Darling Association Membership
8 April 2021	City of Playford	Murray Darling Association Membership
9 April 2021	Balonne Shire Council	Letter of Support MDEDP
9 April 2021	Balonne Shire Council	Letter of Support MDEDP
12 April 2021	Wodonga City Council	Murray Darling Association Membership
14 April 2021	Mid Western Council	Murray Darling Association Membership

Additional correspondence also included submissions to Ministerial Councils regarding the river levels over the Easter period, encouraging consideration of the impacts on regional tourism. As a result, Minister Coulton has requested to be kept briefed on this matter along with Andrew Reynolds committing to raise this issue at the next Basin Officials Committee (BOC) meeting. It is also worth noting that the drop in river levels was minimal this year.

The Board discussed the value of including the correspondence and determined it is worthwhile for the Board to continue to receive all correspondence.

Board queries:

Minister Pitt – Climate Carbon motion: Cr Rebbeck queried if there has been any further response regarding the Climate Carbon motion. The CEO advised this is starting to be discussed at the government level, however she is hesitant to see previous motions reintroduced and the MDA's preference is to pursue objectives with key stakeholders such as CSIRO.

MOTION

(Cr Bronwyn Thomas / Cr Melissa Rebbeck)

That the correspondence be received and noted.

CARRIED

5. Business Arising

5.1 Board Resolution Register

The Board reviewed the motions and actions completed.

MOTION

(Cr Brian Lockyer / Cr John Campbell)

That the Board Resolution Register report be noted.

CARRIED

Board queries:

It has been previously requested that a process be developed to address code of conduct issues.

MOTION

(Cr Melissa Rebbeck / Cr Peter Raison)

That the MDA develop a policy for Code of Conduct procedures.

CARRIED

5.2 Project Funding Applications Update

An overview of the funding applications submitted by the MDA was provided by the CEO which was a huge body of work including industry partners and extended congratulations to all stakeholders and staff involved.

MOTION

(Mayor Samantha O'Toole / Cr Brian Lockyer)

That the Project Funding Applications update be noted.

CARRIED

6. General Business

6.1 Ravensworth Agricultural Company Processing Plant Proposal (confidential item)

The CEO provided a briefing on the proposal submitted by Ron Harris of Ravensworth Agricultural Company and the response from Minster Pitt.

Ravensworth Agricultural Company is requesting community support for the sale of a significant parcel of water back to the Commonwealth as part of the Ravensworth Agricultural Company proposal to develop a processing facility in Balranald Shire.

MOTION

(Mayor Paul Maytom / Cr Melissa Rebbeck)

That the Board note:

1. That different strategies required to recover water for the environment under the Murray Darling Basin Plan, including Commonwealth buy-backs, impact different communities differently and should be applied judiciously on a case by case basis in consideration of all the circumstances, to optimise environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits.
2. That no one strategy should be applied universally, nor ruled out entirely.
3. That local knowledge and informed community participation is at the heart of the successful implementation of the Basin Plan.
4. That the Commonwealth should consider the acquisition of water from the Ravensworth Agricultural Company as specified in the project where it has the support of the community and region from which it will be sold and meets the established standards for socio-economic neutrality.
5. That the MDA write to Minister Pitt and Ravensworth Agricultural Company articulating the MDA's position on this matter.

CARRIED

6.2 MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program

The CEO has recently completed the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program northern basin workshops in Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, St George and Collarenebri in conjunction with Julia Spicer from Engage and Create Consulting.

The Cunnamulla workshop identified a project that could have significant interest to the MDA, for a greater representation of traditional owners and First nations people at a local government level. Initial conversations have been held with NBAN and women in councils in the area, and options are being investigated to have the conversation across local government in the Basin footprint.

MOTION

(Mayor Davies / Mayor O'Toole)

That the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program update be noted.

CARRIED

6.3 Membership and Engagement

The CEO provided an update on recent membership and engagement activities. As a result of the northern tour with Mayor Davies, councils in that region have opted to become members of the MDA.

Clarification was sought and provided on the procedure for a council transferring regions, which includes that border councils can determine the region that best suits their area and interests.

Coonamble Shire Council – Mayor Davies will have to have an additional conversation with the Mayor to confirm attendance. Region 10A meetings will be conducted in conjunction with the JO meeting, with the MDA Region meetings to be held immediately following the JO meetings.

6.4 Report for Delegates

The report is provided for noting.

MOTION

(Cr Thurley / Cr Raison)

That the Report for Delegates be noted.

CARRIED

6.5 Communication and Briefing Reports

The following reports are provided for noting:

6.5.1 ACCC Briefing Paper – Murray Darling Basin Water Markets Inquiry

The Board is to provide any feedback on the report by Friday 23 April 2021.

6.5.2 Productivity Commission Submission – National Water Reform Inquiry

6.5.3 Productivity Commission Submission – Register of Foreign Owned Water Entitlements Inquiry

MOTION

(Mayor O'Toole / Cr Lockyer)

That the Communication and Briefing reports be noted.

CARRIED

6.6 MDA Proposed Name Change Consultation Report

A summary report is provided on the proposed MDA name change for review. Some of the responses were extremely hostile and the Board must be mindful of member views and it would not be productive to change the name at this time.

The Chair recommended the proposed name change be shelved, as the MDA is working hard on a number of projects and do not need the distraction of the proposal that will not achieve a huge benefit.

It was suggested the movers and seconders of the original motion could withdraw the motion at the National Conference.

MOTION

(Cr Thurley /Cr Lockyer)

That the Board:

- 1. Does not support the proposed change of name to Murray Darling Local Government Association.**
- 2. That the Board approve the use of the words Murray Darling Association of Local Governments where appropriate.**
- 3. Note that strong feedback received indicates that the MDA is ready to consider alternate names in the future.**

CARRIED

7. National Conference

7.1 Draft AGM Motions

The draft AGM motions are provided for review by the Board. The Chair encouraged councils submitting motions to discuss with staff, review to ensure they have a clear intent and statement that can be clearly implemented in the next 10 days.

MOTION

(Cr Thurley /Mayor Maytom)

That the Board note the intent of the motions and continue to develop the motions by 30 April.
CARRIED

7.2 Draft 2020/21 Annual Report

The draft 2020/21 Annual Report is provided for review by the Board. There are several regions that have not submitted their annual report which are required by Friday 23 April 2021.

MOTION

(Cr Thurley /Mayor O'Toole)

That the Annual Report be presented to the MDA AGM on 19 May 2021 subject to the inclusion of the finance and auditors report and outstanding region reports.
CARRIED

7.3 2022 National Conference Submission

A submission has been received from Albury City Council to host the 2022 National Conference.

Chair, Cr David Thurley, declared a conflict in this matter and recused himself from voting on this item.

MOTION

(Mayor Davies /Cr Raison)

That the Board:

- 1. Approve Albury City Council as the host of the 2022 National Conference**
- 2. Announce the 2022 National Conference host at the 2021 National Conference**
- 3. Commend Albury City Council on an exceptional submission.**

CARRIED

James Marshall and Nathan Bicknell left the meeting at 10:59am

8. CEO Performance Appraisal and Remuneration Review (confidential)

The CEO declared a direct interest in this item and left the meeting at 11:01am

Chair, Cr David Thurley, Adrian Butler and Peter George have completed the CEO's performance appraisal and remuneration review, which includes a benchmarking report prepared by Blackadder Associates, and the final report is presented for the Board's consideration.

Board discussion points:

- General agreement for the recommended remuneration increase.
- The Board also needs to be realistic, membership fees are not enough to sustain the association, and further increases should be subject to the CEO securing the required income and grant funding to sustain the MDA in the future.
- CEO contract – the current CEO has indicated she may be open to a new contract in September subject to the approved terms and conditions.
- CEO KPIs state that the remuneration increase is subject to securing appropriate grant funding and will form a major component of the role along with strategic projects. The KPIs can be reviewed by the Board.
- It is clear the CEO is building a strong team in the office and backup which did not exist before, which allows the CEO's time to be freed up to focus on strategic projects and grant funding.

MOTION

(Cr Thurley /Mayor Maytom)

That the Board:

- 1. Note the Committee's CEO's Performance Appraisal and Remuneration Review report.**
- 2. Accept the Committee's recommendation for the CEO's remuneration and KPI's for the year ahead.**
- 3. Note that the calculation of the approved back pay will be completed independently by the HR specialist with the MDA's auditor, MGR Accounting.**

CARRIED

The CEO re-joined the meeting at 11:18am

The Chair advised the CEO of the Board's decision, that the motion was passed unanimously, and there is a clear intention to keep the CEO in her role.

Congratulations were extended to the CEO.

9. Meeting Close

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 11:20am