



**Summary Report**  
**79<sup>th</sup> National Conference**  
**2023 Annual General Meeting**

**Murray Darling Association Inc.**  
**Contact: Mark Lamb**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



## About the MDA

The [Murray Darling Association](#) is the peak body representing Local Government across the Murray-Darling Basin, with our membership base divided into 12 separate regions in which Councils have common interests.

- Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent councils in Victoria and New South Wales,
- Regions 5, 6, 7, and 8 represent councils in South Australia,
- Regions 9, 10, and 11 represent councils in New South Wales,
- Region 12 represents councils in Queensland.

As the management, and the success of the Murray-Darling Basin is a matter of concern to our members, the Murray Darling Association has written the following submission relating to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

## MDA Vision Statement

### *Our Vision*

A healthy Murray Darling Basin supports thriving communities, economic development, and sustainable productivity.

### *Our Purpose*

To provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing:

- Information,
- Facilitating debate,
- Seeking to influence government policy.

### *Our Objectives*

To achieve our purpose, we will:

- Advocate on behalf of Basin communities,
- Use local knowledge and expertise to fully understand regional issues,
- Act as a two-way conduit for information and discussion between our communities and governments,
- Encourage and facilitate debate about the things that matter for the Basin's future,
- Explore options to achieve sound solutions to regional issues,
- Test information to ensure a sound base for those options,
- Be an educational resource for the Basin.



## A note from the CEO



Exploring Partnership through collaboration across the Basin the MDA's 79<sup>th</sup> National Conference brought together both MDA member and non-member councils to engage in conversation, network with innovators, scientists, educators, and technical and political leaders of our time.

At our 2023 Annual General Meeting, Members discussed and reviewed over 20 Motions, forming the foundations of the MDA's leadership and advocacy work for the years ahead.

Taking the advocacy in stride, the MDA has already engaged with Australia's Federal Government regarding a number of these Motions, and we are looking for further engagement opportunities with Federal, and State Ministers in the year ahead!



# WELCOME RECEPTION

25/09/2023

Murray Bridge Regional Rowing Centre



The Murray Darling Association welcomed its delegates at the historic Murray Bridge Regional Rowing Centre. Situated on the banks of the beautiful and historic Murray River, delegates were welcomed by Mayor Wayne Thorley, networked, and enjoyed the ambience of one of South Australia's oldest and most successful rowing clubs.

During the evening, Platinum Sponsor Public Safety Training and Response Group presented one of their latest pieces of Drone Technology to the attending delegates.



## STUDY TOUR

26/09/2023

The Study Tour circumnavigated the Lower Lakes and went across the Barrages.



Delegates on the 2023 Study Tour circumnavigated the Lower Lakes and were offered the rare opportunity to travel across the Barrages with key stopover points at Meningie, Pelican Point, the Tauwichee Barrage, SA Water Depot, Murray Mouth, Hindmarsh Bridge and Island, and the Goolwa Barrages before returning to the beautiful Rural city of Murray Bridge.

Accompanied by knowledgeable local guides, delegates engaged with and heard from local experts including Clem Mason, Bryce Buchanan from SA Water, Melissa Rebbeck, Adrienne Rumbelow from the Department of Environment and Water, and Mick Shelton from SA Water.



Contact the Murray Darling Association

For more information, or to find out what membership can do for you!

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# GALA DINNER

27/09/2023

Bridgeport Hotel



Delegates, Sponsors, and Guest Speakers came together to network and socialise over dinner and drinks at the Bridgeport Hotel.

The Bridgeport Hotel offered a relaxed atmosphere overlooking the famous Murray River, with Mr Anthony 'Bear' Lind from Platinum sponsor Public Safety Training and Response Group engaging with delegates through a short welcome speech noting the opportunities and successes that stem from collaboration and partnerships across the Basin.

During the Gala Dinner the Murray Darling Association took the opportunity to thank former Region 6 Chair Melissa Rebbeck, and Life Member Mr Frank Tuckwell OAM for their dedication to the Murray-Darling Basin and the Association over the years.

# CONFERENCE

27/09/2023 - 28/09/2023

Murray Bridge Performing Arts & Function Centre



The Murray Darling Association hosted its 79<sup>th</sup> National Conference at The Rural City of Murray Bridge, in South Australia and featured keynote speakers including the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Basin Experts, Water Users, Irrigation, and Industry heads, as well as Shadow Water Minister Senator Perin Davey and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority CEO, Andrew McConville.

The National Conference brought together heads of Industry, Irrigation, Local Government, State Government, and Education to discuss Partnership through collaboration across the Basin, and explored many themes such as Natural Disaster Recovery, Water Security, The Circular Economy, Preparing for Drought and Water scarcity, and Climate Change.

The annual National Conference is an unrivalled platform to unite all corners of the Murray-Darling Basin's communities at a national level, guiding advocacy, representation, and engagement priorities and initiatives through the Murray Darling Association, the peak body organisation representing and advocating for the needs and interests of over 164 Local Government Areas across the Basin.

During the National Conference, the Murray Darling Association Board had the incredible opportunity to engage with the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon Tanya Plibersek MP over a round table discussion.

Topics discussed included: SDLAM project completion, timeframes, and updates, State Government 450GL frameworks, the Water Amendment Bill 2023, Identifying Constraints, impact of water availability on Industries, Infrastructure projects in the Basin, the MDBA Basin Plan Roadmap, Water Security and Community viability across the Basin.

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Guest Speaker	Affiliation	Perspective
Dr Simon Banks	Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder	<i>CEWH Partnerships</i>
Hon Tanya Plibersek MP	Federal Minister for the Environment and Water	<i>Keynote Speaker</i>
Mr Daniel Blacker	Deputy Inspector-General of Water Compliance	<i>Inspector-General of Water Compliance: Partnerships and Engagements</i>
Trevor Arnold ESM	Public Safety Training and Response Group Pty Ltd	<i>Safety Response and what it means to Local Government</i>
Dr David Post	CSIRO	<i>Research to inform Climate adaptation in the Murray-Darling Basin</i>
Dr Nadine Kelly	SA Department for Environment and Water	<i>The Coorong, its worldwide uniqueness, importance to the Murray-Darling Basin, and current ecological states and ongoing management actions</i>
Ms Stephanie Cooke	NSW Shadow Minister for Water	
Dr Jacki Schirmer	University of Canberra	<i>Wellbeing, Resilience, and Liveability in the Murray-Darling Basin</i>
Dr Alec Rolston	Director, Goyder Institute for Water Research	<i>Collaboration and Partnerships</i>
Prof. Mike Stewardson	CEO, One Basin CRC	<i>Progress of the One Basin CRC</i>
Andrew McConville	CEO, Murray Darling Basin Authority	<i>The implementation of the Basin Plan, the map to the Basin Plan Review, Water Security in the Basin</i>
Janice Green	Bureau of Meteorology	<i>Murray-Darling Basin Water Information</i>
Senator Perin Davey	Federal Shadow Minister for Water	<i>Keynote Speaker</i>
Sarah Flowers & David Thomas	Natural Resources Access Regulator	<i>5 years on the beat – Updates and insights from the NSW Water Regulator</i>
Claire Miller	CEO, NSW Irrigators Council	<i>Murray-Darling Basin from an Irrigator's Perspective</i>
Peter Hayes	Chair, Almond Board of Australia	<i>Perspective from Almond Growers</i>
Alex Zimmermann	SA Flood Recovery Coordinator	<i>River Murray Flood Recovery</i>
Jacqui Hickey	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	<i>The Murray-Darling Basin Plan – next steps</i>
Mark Lamb	CEO, Murray Darling Association	<i>Influence and Progress – Advocacy through Motions</i>

# 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28/09/2023

Murray Bridge Performing Arts & Function Centre



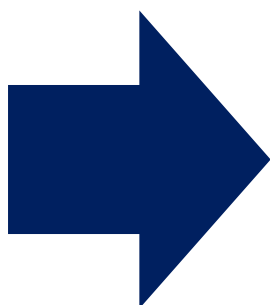
The 2023 Annual General Meeting brought together the association's members and Board Chairs to discuss the association's performance, both financially and through resolutions, as well as explore the MDA's direction for the year ahead.

New Motions were put forth and voted upon regarding the following:

- REDUCTION OF FERAL ANIMAL POPULATIONS
- DAM OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE
- DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY UNREGULATED GROWTH AND THE COST OF THE NEXT DROUGHT
- WILCANNIA WEIR
- NUMERIC EXTRACTION LIMITS
- MEETING WATER DEMANDS WITH LESS WATER
- MEMBERSHIP VALUE PROPOSITION
- REDUCTION OF RIVER WATER RELIANCE FOR NON-RIPARIAN COUNCILS
- TAILEM BEND – KEITH – BORDERTOWN PIPELINE
- ON-FARM EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES
- RAMSAR WETLAND FUNDING
- LEVEE BANK MAINTENANCE
- RIVERBANK SLUMPING
- EUROPEAN CARP CONTROL MEASURES
- REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION
- MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN – UNREGULATED FLOWS
- TRANSPARENCY AND COOPERATION
- QUARTERLY SDLAM PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTS
- RESTORING OUR RIVERS BILL
- PROTECTION OF REGIONAL WATER UTILITIES
- FUNDING COMMITMENT FOR SAFE AND SECURE WATER PROGRAMS
- CONSTRUCTION & COMPLETION OF SOUTH LAGOON PIPE CONNECTOR
- RIVER MURRAY MOUTH INVESTIGATION

Taking the advocacy in stride, the MDA has already engaged with Australia's Federal Government regarding a number of these Motions, and we are looking for further engagement opportunities with Federal, and State Ministers in the year ahead!

2023 AGM



**ONGOING**

Engagement with State & Federal Government Ministers

**SUBMISSION**

Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Bill 2023



**2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
July 2024  
Tamworth, NSW



The Murray Darling Association is delighted to announce that the **80<sup>th</sup> National Conference** will be hosted by the **Tamworth Regional Council** in **July 2024**.

Tamworth is a thriving regional city and is the heart of the New England region. It's a destination for family fun, outdoor adventure, foodie delights, the arts and heritage, plus so much more!

Renowned for its laid-back lifestyle, incredible landscapes and generous hospitality, Tamworth is where rich heritage meets outdoor adventure, arts and culture complement luxury, and sports intersect action and fun!





# The benefits of being a MDA member

Becoming a MDA member can take your voice, your representation within the Murray-Darling Basin to the next level.



## The benefits of Membership are flowing freely to all our regions!

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is your peak body for local government in the management of Basin water resources, working together to inform and influence both State, and Federal Government.

The MDA strives to provide effective representation of Local Government and communities at State, and Federal, level in the development of policy and the management of Murray-Darling Basin resources.

With ongoing projects, influence, representation, and partnerships with the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the MDBA, the National Carp Control Plan, University of Southern Queensland, the One Basin CRC, and Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO, the MDA has much to offer to its members!



**FIND OUT MORE!**



## Programs and Projects

The MDA continues to develop its partnerships with peak bodies and agencies across the Basin.

Find out more about what the MDA is doing to support Basin communities.

## Engage with Councils across the Basin!

The MDA has strong partnerships with peak bodies and agencies across the Murray-Darling Basin, ensuring continued engagement with, and on behalf of councils and communities through ongoing projects, programs, and committees.

Involvement in the [Sustainable Recreation Steering Committee](#), and the [Murraylands Riverland LGA Water Position Paper](#), submissions of numerous reports ranging from the [Productivity Commission to the NSW Select Committee on Floodplain Harvesting](#), as well as partnerships with Australia's national science agency, the [CSIRO](#) have sought to address ongoing concerns and interests of its members, ensuring continued representation on a national stage.

Programs such as [Connecting Catchments and Communities](#), The Circular Economy Market Analysis, and the recently concluded [Basin Communities Leadership Program](#) have brought water leaders across the Murray-Darling Basin together, to discuss and influence water, and Basin resource policy across SA, VIC, NSW, the ACT, and QLD.

Following the successful conclusion of the Basin Communities Leadership Program, the MDA will continue to develop industry leaders across the Basin through tailored programs and events.



**FIND OUT MORE!**

Contact the Murray Darling Association

For more information, or to find out what membership can do for you!

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**mda.asn.au**

# Events and Conferences

The MDA holds numerous events, meetings and conferences across each year.

Find out more about what you can do with your MDA membership.



## The MDA is your opportunity to be a part of the solution, to inform future policy!

The MDA hosts numerous events each year, such as the MDA Region 6 [Annual Stakeholder Symposium](#), the Inter-regional Meeting, Water and Community Forums, and culminating in the MDA's [annual National Conference](#).

Membership, and involvement with the MDA is your opportunity to be part of the solution – to join the conversation, to inform future policy, and to engage with the innovators, scientists, educators, and leaders of our time!



## MDA Membership

Organised into 12 Local Government areas, MDA members represent communities across NSW, VIC, QLD, and SA!

Find out more about MDA membership!

## Our Purpose: Providing effective representation of Local Government and communities.

The Murray Darling Association is a membership-based peak representative organisation representing local government and the communities we serve across the Murray-Darling Basin since 1944.

As the third level of government in Australia, and the one most directly connected to community, local government has a valuable contribution to make in the processes, community consultation, and the formulation of decisions made and taken in the continuing implementation of the Basin Plan. This is enhanced beyond measure when local government is working together Basin wide.

Built on a strong foundation of good governance, we work with and for member councils, in collaboration with state based local government associations (LGASA, MAV, LGNSW and LGAQ), Regional Organisations of Councils, Joint Organisations and other local government affiliations.

The MDA provides its members with the means and opportunity to actively participate in informing water policy, and provides state and Federal governments, the MDBA, CSIRO, and other agencies with an opportunity to access community consultation and perspectives via a comprehensive community network coverage.



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