



MDA Delegates Report

January 2022

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is Australia's peak body representing local government across the Murray-Darling Basin.

The following report should be tabled at council and provides delegates and their councils with an overview of MDA activities and engagements.



A note from the Murray Darling Association National President:

The months of December and January have been busy, and quite unusual with respect to Basin weather conditions.

NSW saw its local government elections held on 4th December with 51 candidates in the Albury LGA. The poll was declared on 20th December, and I was re-elected with a term of office of 2 years and 9 months with elections again in September 2024.

With Spring and early summer having shaped up to be quite wet, and December and January being characterised by violent storms, with subsequent minor local flooding and significant crop damage.

After the disruptions of Covid and the delayed elections in 2020 and 2021, the region 1 AGM was delayed and will now occur in the first week of March.



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1. Foreword

The Murray Darling Association has returned for 2022, and there is much to look forward to!

With continued progress towards the goals set out by the 2021 National Conference and the Association's Vision 2025 Strategic Plan, the MDA has set its sights on completing the rollout of the Basin Communities Leadership Program, and its next big event; the 2022 National Conference and AGM to be held in Albury.

2. Key Meetings & Events

The below table summarises the association's key engagements with the Basin communities.

Date	Event/meeting	Location
25/11/21	Channel 7 Interview	Albury
29/11/21	Meeting with The Hon Sussan Ley MP	Held Virtually
3/12/21	MDBA – Introduction to MDA CEO	Held Virtually
3/12/21	IGWC – Introduction to MDA CEO	Held Virtually
9/12/21	Max Finlayson – CSU	Yackandandah
9/12/21	Meeting with Hon Damian Drum MP	Shepparton
10/12/21	DPIE Water – Stakeholder Engagement Roundtable	Held Virtually
15/12/21	MRLGA Water Position Paper Inception Meeting	Held Virtually
5/01/22	Meeting with Murray River Council	Held Virtually
12/01/22	Brad Ferris – Deputy CEO AlburyCity Council	Albury
14/01/22	Nicola Gleeson – EO RAMJO	Albury
17/01/22	Meeting with Kevin Anderson – Minister Lands and Water	Deniliquin
19/01/22	Meeting with Terri Butler MP – Shadow Minister for Environment & Water	Held Virtually

3. Working towards Vision 2025

Vision 2025 is the Murray Darling Association's five-year Strategic Plan. It sets out the association's goals and describes the strategies we will implement to achieve them.

Vision 2025 is built upon the foundations established by the 2016-19 Strategic Plan, and confirms our place as the Basin's primary driver in local leadership and policy development.

To view the current Strategic Plan, visit the [MDA website](#), or contact the office on [\(03\) 5480 3805](tel:0354803805)



Goal	How	Reference
Local Leadership/Leadership and Engagement	MRLGA Water Position Paper Inception Meeting	The MRLGA was established to work with the Local Government Association of South Australia in achieving its aims and objectives and to provide strong advocacy on what matters most to the communities of the Constituent Councils.
	MDA Pre-Budget Submission to Australian Government Treasury, September 2021. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MDA seeks to continue to collaborate with Basin governments in implementing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and the development of agreed water sharing arrangements beyond 2024. 	[See Outgoing Correspondence, MDA Board Meeting 412 Minutes]
Science & Education	Progress towards establishing the Virtual Centre of Excellence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a virtual space for local government and stakeholders across the Basin to collaborate and innovate. 	SAC_Minutes_0012 4.4.2 , The Strategic Advisory Committee met virtually on 22/09/21.
Inform better government policy	Submission to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan – Region 1	MDA_Submission Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan
Exchange information & facilitate informed debate	Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated debate through panel sessions, Q&A, and a study tour of the Lower Lakes and the Barrages. The MDA is continuing to cultivate its strategic relationships with the Basin LGAs, allowing for a more informed and interconnected decision and policy making process 	Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium
Engagement in policy process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Letters sent to Government and tourism bodies in support of Recreational Water. Letters sent to Federal & State Governments to commend exploring alternate means to exploit the carp as a resource that could benefit Basin communities. 	[See Outgoing Correspondence, MDA Board Meeting 412 Minutes]

4. MDA Board Meeting and the Committee of Regional Chairs

The Murray Darling Association held its *Committee of Regional Chairs* meeting on 27 September 2021, with the MDA Board convening on 18 October 2021. The committee and MDA Board meet bi-monthly for the purpose of knowledge sharing, regional development, and inter-regional collaboration. The MDA Board is scheduled to reconvene on 6 December 2021, with the next meeting of the Committee of Regional Chairs yet to be confirmed.

The MDA makes all board meeting [Minutes](#) available on the MDA website.

5. Region Meetings

Our 12 regions meet quarterly. Each meeting is an incredible opportunity to collaborate with councils in your region and hear from fantastic guest speakers. To find out when your next region meeting is, please contact your chair or our office on (03) 5480 3805.

To find out more about what is happening in other MDA regions, please head over to www.mda.asn.au, where all region meeting minutes are available.



6. 78th National Conference Economics, Dams, and Infrastructure

The 78th National Conference & AGM will be held in **Albury, 19-21 September 2022** at the **Albury Entertainment Centre**.



In a year where much has been disrupted and affected by COVID-19, it comes as no surprise that the towns, regions, and countries to emerge quickest and strongest are those with innovative, connected local leadership.

This can be said doubly so for local government and the communities of the Murray Darling Basin. Basin councils have, after all, spent years building connections, infrastructure and resilient economies across catchments and communities.

A resilient economy, and infrastructure to support it, is essential to our people. In the same way, a healthy river system must have a balance of flow and harvest. **There is no future on a dry system.**

The MDA's 78th National Conference & AGM 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.

[Join us in Albury](#), home to the winding Murray River and its waterways; where local, technical, and political leaders will come together to tackle the big issues of the Basin and forge a future for councils, catchments, and communities.



7. Basin Communities Leadership Program

The Basin Communities Leadership Program in Victoria and South Australia has been slated for a return in March!

The program is offering up to **15 fully funded places per program**, each valued at \$4,800 at no cost to the participant beyond their time and travel. The program involves an on-line guided learning component, a two-day face to face workshop, and the option to **attend the MDA National Conference** with free registration to engage with other community leaders from across the Basin.

Limited places are available.

REGISTER NOW!

To find out more about the program and how your council can get involved, contact:

Tim Phillips *Communications and Engagement Officer*

Phone: [\(03\) 5480 3805](tel:0354803805) Email: t.phillips@mda.asn.au



Collarenebri BCLP: (left to right) Emeritus CEO Emma Bradbury, Bridgette Fitzgerald, Luke & Dylan Farr, Cr John Campbell, Christine Ford, and the amazing Julia Spicer. (Not pictured) Thomas Connor, Shelly Filips, Keith Whiteman, Ang Pasang Rai, Julie Privett, Denielle Smith, and Mark Shephard

