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Ordinary Meeting of the Board Meeting 401 Monday 17th August 2020

MINUTES - MEETING No. 401

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1. Present

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Dennis Patterson	City of Greater Shepparton	Region 2
Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council	Region 5
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Council	Region 11
Cr Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Pete George	M&S Group	Treasurer
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO
Jessica Maher	MDA	Minute Taker

Meeting open at 10.33am

1.2. Apologies:

Cr Brian Lockyer – Region 8 chair – Barunga West Council

Cr Phyllis Miller – Region 10 chair – Forbes Shire Council

Motion: That the apologies are noted

J MacAllister / J Campbell

Carried

1.3. Absent

Cr Andrew Tilley – Region 7 chair – City of Mitcham

1.4. Declarations

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1. [Meeting 400](#) held via Zoom Calendar Monday 20th July 2020

Motion: That the minutes of board meeting 400 are approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

M Rebbeck / S O'Toole

Carried

3. REPORTS

3.1. Chairman's report

3.2. Finance reports

E Bradbury provided a summary of the finance reports. In addition to the finance reports, E Bradbury also noted that the MDA's surplus vehicle was sold this week, which would be reflected in next month's annual report.

Motion: That the finance reports be received

P Raison / P Maytom

Carried

3.3. Chief Executive Officers report

E Bradbury provided the following summary of the CEO report:

Meetings and Engagements in Canberra

E Bradbury discussed recent meetings held in Canberra, where MDA had extensive meetings with peak agency groups regarding the conference and other strategically aligned topics.

Membership

E Bradbury also discussed the MDA's ongoing drive to grow memberships and particularly how regions can approach individual memberships strategically and tactically, noting how those individuals will add value to the objectives of the MDA. The MDA plans to review our existing comprehensive membership policy particularly regarding individual membership.

76th National Conference & AGM

E Bradbury noted that the MDA executive have been busy in preparation for the conference. E Bradbury noted that this year's program is a high-level program with a structured narrative. The success of the conference is looking really positive, but there are going to be a number of ways to measure success for this event. E Bradbury noted that there is a risk of low registration numbers due to virtual fatigue. E Bradbury also noted that this year's conference has the strongest alignment to national narrative yet.

Basin Communities Leadership Program

The Basin Communities Leadership Program will be launching on the 10th and 11th of September. E Bradbury noted that the MDA will be launching with the first workshop to be held in Wakool, NSW.

Welcome Adam Scott – newest member of our team

E Bradbury welcomed Adam to the team as an intern.

M Rebbeck asked whether the MDA would be holding a membership drive at the National Conference.

E Bradbury provided board members with an update regarding the MDA National Conference marketing, including the champion/care kits, which have been sent out to the Mayors and CEOs at all 172 Basin councils, as well as the board members. The packs included:

- Promotional mug including coffee, tea, sugar and biscuits
- Marketing Letter
- National conference program
- Murray Darling Association membership booklet - membership benefits & FAQ's flyers inside
- Membership offer flyer
- Membership offer card or registration offer
- Greater Shepparton cow stress ball
- Greater Shepparton visitor guide

E Bradbury noted that the MDA program has been specifically designed to include note-taking space so that participants can be more connected to the virtual conference.

J MacAllister ask if it would be appropriate for the chairs to ring non-member councils for a follow-up conversation. E Bradbury said this was a great idea.

3.4. MDA Annual Report

E Bradbury commended the annual report, noting that the report reflects an incredibly intense year that every board member should be proud of their contribution to.

E Bradbury also noted that she is incredibly proud of the staff and would like to make a mention particularly to Jess and to Kate (Pimlico printing) but Jess has put in a mammoth effort leading MDA staff to produce that report as well.

D Thurley expressed that the annual report looks great and will be a great marketing tool.

Motion: That the annual report is accepted

M Rebbeck / P Raison

Carried

3.5. Region reports

Region 1

Cr David Thurley: *COVID-19 in Region 1 is just an absolute disaster. We are having the Deputy Premier here on Thursday to sort out some of the mess. We've had issues like politicians driving from Melbourne to Canberra, but ordinary citizens being stuck in Wodonga for 6 days because they were not allowed to traverse NSW to get back to the ACT. We've got some kids at school and some kids not. We've got tradies who can't work in one place. I guess like all towns along the Murray, we've got farmers with property on both sides of the river who can't attend one. It's been a mess. The only good thing about what's happened here is we've had quite a lot of rainfall. Hume Dam is now about 15% higher than this time last year, and we've got good run off into catchment. Another thing I'd like to mention that for this year's virtual national conference, Albury City is going to use a room in our entertainment centre where we can get around 10 to 15 delegates together to watch and participate in the conference. If you've got an opportunity to do that, it might be a great way to make the conference a bit more personable.*

Region 2

Cr Dennis Patterson: *Region 2 is going well. We are celebrating the fact that we are 200km north of Melbourne, and 100km south of the Murray so we're not in NSW. We are in a sweet spot. World is really good, sunshine every day. It's a beautiful place to be. We're very happy here. We've been doing some video work for the National Conference, and there's a bit of work to do for the next few weeks.*

Region 4

Cr Jane MacAllister: *The border closures have hit Region 4 hard. South Australia has gone back to the hard border closure, which is affecting healthcare with Adelaide being the closest capital city to us. It impacts Broken Hill, who are closely aligned to South Australia and even on South Australian time. Townships like Murrayville are being left in the lurch. There's been lots of agitation by local representatives to get a tri-state border bubble. The amount of camper trailers, caravans and people all over the place is both excellent for the economy but a bit scary for communities who are at-risk near Menindee. There is also concern obviously around the Menindee Water Saving project and the lack of effective consultation by DPIE has once again come to the fore, prompting letters to key representatives.*

Region 5

Cr Peter Raison: *We too have had rain recently, which is good. Melissa and I had a meeting with Tim Smythe from the RDA, which is a good alliance for us to have. Region 6 and Region 5 will*

be conversing more. I think it will be a good relationship. We're very similar in our areas. Region 5 membership is going to be 100 per cent at this stage again.

Region 6

Cr Melissa Rebbeck: *Just wanted to re-iterate about the meeting Tim Smythe. He had a draft report for us how we can engage better with RDA. Both Peter and I need to review that document and provide feedback. Also, we've just completed our Climate Ready communities document. I'd be happy for that to be circulated. It'd be great to see others come through as well. As a climate change scientist, I just want to talk to you about the importance of getting those in. We're really proud we've done a lot of extensive work on that with a lot of councils having input on the document. At Murray Bridge, we're going to encourage as many people as we can to come to Murray Bridge Town Hall to watch the National Conference.*

Region 9

Cr Paul Maytom: *Region 9 Annual General Meeting was held on 26 June 2020.*

Elections held and the results were as follows:

- o Chairman: Paul Maytom (elected unopposed)*
- o Executive: Cr John Dal Broi – Griffith City Council.*
- o Cr Dino Zappacosta – Griffith City Council.*
- o Mr Bede Spannagle – RWCC*

Other events and activities in Region 9:

WaterNSW – Customer Advisory Group

- o The Group received an update on metering and the roll out of telemetry.*
 - o The Group sought to gain a better understanding of groundwater extraction and its connectivity to rivers and aquifers.*
 - o The Group were updated on the results of the NRAR audit conducted in the lower Murrumbidgee groundwater system. The audit identified over extraction of 9% in the review sample (being 218 of 471 WALs). As a result, more checks and balances will be implemented on farm/commercial groundwater WALs. This was the first NRAR audit conducted in the western part of NSW.*
 - o The Group sought to gain a better understanding of the methodology used by WaterNSW to calculate "River" and "Conveyance" losses.*
 - o The Group sought an update on the Yanco Creek System SDLAM Projects, given that the Yanco SDL Customer Advisory Group has not been able to meet (owing to COVID-19). The Group is still awaiting information from the Technical Advisory Group for this project.*
- The outlook is very promising for Region 9 because of the recent rain and improved water allocations.*

Region 11

Cr John Campbell: *We had a region meeting on Friday. Unfortunately, there was only 2 councils in attendance. We had Dr Lindsay White as a guest speaker, which was absolutely brilliant. There'll be a link to his presentation in our minutes when they come through to head office. If anybody wants to go and have a look at it, it's well and truly worthwhile. One key thing that I picked up from his presentation about wetlands is that they like to see them dry for one year and then wet for three years for the resilience of their eco-system.*

Region 12

Cr Sam O'Toole: *Emma and I have been having discussions about to restart the Region 12 meetings. I would like to echo about borders creating havoc. I think we've got a very similar mirrored issue on NSW / QLD border, which is probably taking up most of my time. For communities that split the border, it just seems to be eating up most of our time sorting out border disasters. I've got a briefing following this meeting about the CRC project and on Wednesday sitting in on a meeting about the weir river and Mungadai, and BCC meeting tomorrow.*

E Bradbury noted growing trend in relationships with the MDA, LGA / ROC and the RDA.

E Bradbury noted that as the MDA undertakes regional boundary realignment, this triangulation will become more prevalent.

E Bradbury provided a summary of existing networks and relationships in this space:

- Region 5 and Region 6 collaborating with their LGA and RDA.
- Region 8 and triangulating their LGA and their RDA to develop their climate positions through councils.
- Region 10 having similar discussion with NSW Central JO and MDA.
- Starting to kick off that conversation with R11 and Namoi JO.

Motion: That the region reports are noted.

J Campbell / M Rebbeck

Carried

3.6. Communication and Briefing reports

3.5.1 Delegates Report

Motion: That the delegates report is noted.

P Raison / D Patterson

Carried

3.5.2 First Flush Submission

J MacAllister commended the MDA executive on an excellent submission.

E Bradbury said the submission reflects developing skillsets within the MDA, particularly commending James for his work on the First Flush report.

Motion: That the First Flush submission reports are noted.

P Maytom / D Thurley

Carried

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1. Correspondences Out

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.1.1	Marketing letter to Mayors & CEO's across the Basin (170 Councils)	Invitation to attend the 76 th National Conference

4.2 Correspondences In

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.2.1	City of Holdfast Bay (Region 7)	Membership Cancellation
4.2.2	District Council of Mount Remarkable (Region 8)	Membership Cancellation
4.2.2	Notification of the Passing of Mr Rex Adams (Region 7)	

Motion: That the Board receive correspondence.

D Thurley / S O'Toole

Carried

Motion: That the MDA write and congratulate Sir Angus Houston to the chair of the MDBA and seek a meeting

J MacAllister / S O'Toole

Carried

5 STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Advisory Committee met on the 30th July 2020 and the following matters were referred to the Committee for discussion and recommendations: Minutes of meeting 0010

5.1 Development of Position Paper

Board Meeting 398 – 3.2.3 – 6.2 *Development of MDA Position statement*

To articulate the position of the MDA on key issues. The position paper will be an ongoing living document available for constant updating, and a platform to tie in other regional positions.

Motion: The MDA undertake the process subject to available resources, reflecting positions adopted by Councils.

5.2 Regional Profiles

Board Meeting 398 – 5.2 – *Climate change risk to Australia's built environment report, could the MDA adopt any of the report into its strategic outlook.*

Motion: That councils each formulate their own position and response. Where possible these should be provided to the MDA for awareness and support.

5.3 Regional Boundaries

Board Meeting 398 – 3.2.2 – 3.3 *That the MDA Executive to refer realignment of the MDA boundaries to the Strategic Advisory Committee.*

Motion: That the CEO provide the board/region chairs with a discussion paper, including proposed regions as a start point for consultation on boundary realignment

5.4 Board Sitting Fees

Board Meeting 398 – 7.1 That the matter of the board member sitting fees be referred to the SAC for their consideration and advice.

Motion: The Strategic Advisory committee recommends not to pursue.

Motion: That the Strategic Advisory group provide the noted recommendations to the board of the MDA for their consideration. **Moved: A Butler Seconded: B Lewis.**

M Rebbeck recommended that the board table Item 5.4 until after the MDA 76th National Conference & AGM, when the board has more time to consider.

D Thurley agreed but noted that in NSW it would not be possible for chairs to be paid a sitting fee.

D Patterson agreed, and said this would be same for chairs in Victoria.

E Bradbury noted that as it has been discussed a couple of times at board level. E Bradbury suggested that M Rebbeck prepare a position paper for board sitting fees to be presented to D Thurley.

In regards to 5.1, J MacAllister noted that she would like to see a summary of recommendations from all the recent reports and aligned to better understand consistent recommendations and where action is necessary. J MacAllister will email the board her recommendation.

Motion: That the Strategic Minutes 0010 are noted and received.

J Campbell / P Raison

Carried

6 BUSINESS ARISING

6.1 Review of actions table

MDA Matters in Progress arising from previous Meetings
Board to review the motions arising and actions completed

6.2 MDA Science and Education Advisory Subcommittee

Board Meeting 399 item 6.2

Board Meeting 400 item 5.1

Action: That the chairs of each region provide feedback on the *Terms of Reference* by board meeting 401.

The Science and Education subcommittees is an opportunity to develop knowledge within the MDA, by inviting skills-based members who can focus their skills, expertise and networks in areas that will benefit the MDA and align with our strategic priorities. The subcommittees are also an opportunity to indicate to members and stakeholders that the board is taking the strategic partnership with the CSIRO, and our commitment to initiatives that build education outcomes across the Basin seriously and invite their active participation.

Several Chairs have provided feedback; however, the Executive has run out of time to progress this matter.

Motion: Carry Forward

6.3 Murray-Darling Basin Roundtable

As previously advised to the board (Meeting 394 Item 5.3) the MDA has been invited to and will host a Murray Darling Basin Roundtable event initiated by the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists.

Murray-Darling Basin Roundtable will bring together key stakeholders to address immediate and long-term challenges of water security and river health in the Basin. Participants will work towards identifying constructive actions that can be supported by communities, industries, and governments.

The MDA have submitted three proposed actions noting that all three actions align with the MDA Strategic Plan 2025

- a) Create an alignment of our national plans and priorities
- b) Establish and resource the MDB Centre for Excellence
- c) Establish a coalition of peaks

Motion: That the Board note the submissions to the MDB Roundtable

J MacAllister / S O'Toole

Carried

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 ACCC's Murray-Darling Basin inquiry interim report

The ACCC's Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry interim report was released 30th Jul 2020 and can be accessed on the ACCC website at <https://www.accc.gov.au/focus-areas/inquiries-ongoing/murray-darling-basin-water-markets-inquiry/interim-report>.

The interim report discusses a range of issues identified throughout the inquiry and sets out potential options for improving the operation of Murray-Darling Basin water markets. The ACCC welcomes feedback in response to the interim report. ***The ACCC requests submissions by 28 August 2020.***

A Briefing paper has been prepared by the Executive for the board's awareness.

J MacAllister noted that the Productivity Commission has released an issues paper into the National Water Forum, which she recommended to the board and the MDA executive to read and prepare a submission for.

Motion: That the Board

- a) note the briefing paper for the ACCC's Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry interim report.
- b) Provide any comments and feedback on the draft that they would like to consider for inclusion in the MDA submission

D Patterson / P Raison

Carried

7.2 2020 Annual General Meeting

Pursuant to Part 6 s17 (6) of the constitution, the Executive is required to post the Notice of Annual General Meeting, Agenda and Motions by the 14th August 2020.

The Agenda and Motions were forwarded via a **Confidential** email on 11TH August 2020

J MacAllister inquired about the release date of the Agenda and Motions.

E Bradbury said we will put these online and send out to board members a link to the agenda / motions.

D Patterson asked for more information about the AGM voting process.

J MacAllister noted that the MDA will need to have a list of who voted for which motion and suggested Slido as a potential tool for the AGM.

E Bradbury commended the board members on their collaboration, particularly Dennis and Melissa on some strong leadership on aligning with the motion about the 450GL.

Motion: That the board note the Agenda and proposed motions for the MDA Annual General Meeting Noting for comment

P Maytom / S O'Toole

Carried

7.3 Australian Government – Trademark renewal

The MDA trademark number 610812 is due for renewal. To renew for 10 years the fee will be \$400.00

Should the MDA not renew:

- a) There is a 6-month grace period to pay plus on costs
- b) After the 6 months the trademark will be removed from the register with status – Not paid
- c) It will then be not legally protected, and others can apply for the trademark
- d) If we decide later that we do indeed want the trademark, the MDA will need to file a new application.

J Campbell asked about the difference between trademark and logo.

Motion: The Board does not renew trademark 610812 for a further 10 years and ask CEO to examine registration or similar of our logo

D Thurley / J MacAllister

Carried

7.4 Conference Marketing Strategy

All Region chairs have been sent their champion packs.

Task list for Regional Chairs and champions, we ask that you go through each of the items enclosed in the package to assist in maximising registrations in each of your regions.

8. Items from the Regions.

Our Region: Informing the Board Agenda

E Bradbury asked board members for feedback regarding the items from the regions.

ACTION: MDA to send out template of “Informing the Board Agenda” to board.

E Bradbury noted that the “Informing the Board Agenda” templates are designed to be used at region meetings to elevate regional issues to national board level.

J Campbell spoke about the benefits of submitting regional agenda items to the board for consideration and consideration.

P Maytom noted that he would like to better understand the impact and engagement of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority’s Regional Engagement Officers.

J Campbell noted that there is an update from Region 11’s Regional Engagement Officer at each region meeting, which is recorded in the minutes.

M Rebbeck also noted that Region 6 has Regional Engagement Officers attend every region meeting, and said that their reports are very useful to guide discussions.

S O’Toole also noted a very positive relationship with their former local Regional Engagement Officer.

D Thurley suggested that the MDA write a letter to the MDBA asking us to give us a review of the outcomes of the REOs in each of the regions.

ACTION: MDA write a letter to the MDBA asking for a review of the REO engagement and outcomes in each of the regions

D Patterson noted that he thinks this issue is really important and that we should put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

S O’Toole noted that not all of the regionalisation of the MDBA workforce are REOs and noted that the REO positions are only funded currently until June 2021.

Meeting closed.