



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Ordinary Meeting of the Board Meeting 396 Monday 23rd March 2020

MINUTES - MEETING No. 396

1. ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 Present
Meeting open at 1.00pm

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Dennis Patterson	City of Greater Shepparton	Region 2
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr Brian Lockyer	Barunga West Council	Region 8
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Council	Region 11
Cr Richard Marsh	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO
Tony Banks	MDA	Executive
Jessica Maher	MDA	Minute Taker

- 1.2 Apologies:

Cr Peter Raison	Mid Murray Council	Region 5
Cr Phyllis Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Pete George	M&S Group	Treasurer

Motion: That apologies be accepted and noted.

B Lockyer / D Patterson

Carried

- 1.3 Declarations

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 2.1 [Meeting 395](#) held via Zoom Calendar Monday 17TH February 2020

Motion: That the minutes of board meeting 395 are approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

J Campbell / B Lockyer

Carried

3. REPORTS

3.1 [Chairman's report](#)

D Thurley provided a brief summary of the chairman's report, including events such as the recent Region 1 meeting, and his attendance at the Interim Inspector-General's consultation in Albury.

3.2 [Finance Report:](#)

E Bradbury provided a finance report, on behalf of P George, MDA Treasurer.

E Bradbury noted that the financial reports will look different next month given there have been significant adjustments last week due to BCLP reassignments. E Bradbury said that based on the original reports as attached, the balance sheet remains healthy in terms of cash.

E Bradbury also noted that the MDA's new end of financial year is March 31.

3.3 [Chief Executive Officers report](#)

In addition to the CEO's report, E Bradbury provided an update to the board in terms of COVID-19 and its impacts on the MDA.

E Bradbury noted that the staff are working hard to develop and put in place continuity plans, communications and strategies for developments in this situation. E Bradbury emphasised that as a first principle, the MDA's priority is to ensure continuity of service and employment.

E Bradbury also noted that the MDA will be well placed in the recovery process for Basin communities, and assisting the government on supporting communities in the Basin through the MDA's extensive network.

D Patterson noted that one of the impacts of COVID-19 may be that some councils will struggle to pay for the membership fees, and this is something that the MDA needs to be mindful of.

E Bradbury concluded that the MDA's strategy for financial continuity will definitely take into account that membership fees will be impacted

3.4 [Region reports](#)

Region 4

Cr Jane MacAllister: *The water as you may well know has made its way to Menindee, lots of excitement from small towns that haven't seen water for some time. The lower darling remains dry. A lot of irrigators down there have grapes that are just about ready to be harvested and don't want nasty water to get sucked up through their pumps and have irrigation impacted. A lot of concern in the community about whether management of that water was the same as it was last time. The next lot of chatter now is whether sufficient water will arrive via the lower darling and whether it would activate water allocations for general security in the lower basin. We're having weekly water critical advisory group meetings. We had a council meeting and it was probably our last one face to face. Trying to work out what we can continue with council services, and keeping abreast of what is happening in the water space.*

Region 8

Cr Brian Lockyer: *Due to all of the recent announcements, a lot of the events have been cancelled or deferred in our region. At this stage, our next region 8 meeting will be done 3rd or 4th of May but we're not clear yet if it will go ahead or how.*

Motion: That the reports are noted.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 Correspondences Out

- 4.1.1 NSW Water Management [Minister Pavey](#)
- 4.1.2 NSW Water Management [Minister Pavey](#)
- 4.1.3 NSW Water Management [Media Release](#)
- 4.1.4 Canberra Visit 26 – 27 February 2020
 - 4.1.4.1 [Communication report](#)
 - 4.1.4.2 [Correspondences](#) Combined
- 4.1.5 National Conference [Notification of change of date letters](#)

4.2 Correspondences In

- 4.2.1 National Water Infrastructure – feasibility investment [The Hon Dr Anthony Lynham MP](#)
- 4.2.2 MDBA Chair [Correspondence](#) Combined Minister Pavey and Minister Neville

M Rebbeck noted that the draft report of the Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions report has been released and expressed that MDA and its regions should do their best to provide feedback and comments on this.

Motion: That the Board received correspondence.

5 BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 Review of actions table

[MDA Matters in Progress](#) arising from previous Meetings

Board will review the motions arising and actions completed from previous board meetings in more detail at Board Meeting 397.

5.2 Strategic Workshop Priorities

The 3 top priorities identified for the MDA at the Strategic Workshop on 12th & 13th March 2020 in Moama were:

1. Development and production of **Membership Tools and Services**.
2. Implementation of **Strategic Projects, Initiatives and Programs** within the wider MDB Footprint.
3. Establishment of the **Murray-Darling Basin Local Government Centre of Excellence**.

The updated Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 will be presented to the Board for consideration at the April 2020 Board Meeting.

E Bradbury provided further updates to the board about advice from the MDA's strategic advisory group, which included aligning our strategic plan with our the NSW framework.

M Rebbeck noted her region's concern regarding the strategic priorities, and sought more opportunities to give further feedback.

D Thurley strongly encouraged board members to send any further comments and suggestions to the MDA executive as soon as possible.

J MacAllister reflected on the strategic workshop and recommended that Bob Stewart be approached to join the Strategic Advisory Group.

E Bradbury agreed, and recommended that J MacAllister propose a motion recommending B Stewart.

Motion: That the CEO approach Bob Stewart to join the advisory group.

J MacAllister / D Thurley

Carried

5.3 2021 National Conference and AGM

In 2019 the Greater City Shepparton Council and the Wentworth Council submitted competitive tendered applications to hold the 2020 National Conference, with GCSC awarded with the hosting rights for 2020. There has been growing support for Region 4 to hold the upcoming 2021 National Conference and AGM with Wentworth Council being the ideal host.

Motion: That the Board award Region 4 hosting right for the 2021 National Conference to Wentworth Council on a date to be determined by agreement

J Campbell/ B Lockyer

Carried

5.4 2020 National Conference

Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis and rapidly changing circumstances, we are unable to predict whether we will be able to proceed with the 76th National Conference in Shepparton, July 22nd, 23rd and 24th as initially planned. We are closely monitoring Departmental advice around the COVID-19 developments.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced (18/03/2020)

“Indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are banned but schools, universities, airports, public transport, medical and emergency services facilities, aged care homes, jails, courts, parliaments, supermarkets and many workplaces are exempt”

1. The MDA staff will provide updated communication reports weekly based on the best available advice.
2. A decision to proceed or cancel this event will be made by the Board at the appropriate time.

Motion: That the MDA:

- a) Postpone the 76th National Conference currently scheduled
- b) Monitor closely Departmental advice around the COVID-19 developments and provide updates
- c) Notify Stakeholders

J MacAllister / M Rebbeck

Carried

5.5 The Murray Darling Local Government Association

The Strategic Advisory Committee have considered a range of options for naming conventions of the MDA. Ministerial approval and registration of the name Murray Darling Local Government Association occurred in 2019 pending further consultation prior to use or adoption.

General discussion agreed that the entitlement and responsibility afforded as a registered Local Government Association aligns with the priorities identified in consultation for the 2020 - 2024 MDA Strategic Plan.

Motion: That the Murray Darling Association

- i) Maintain registration of the name Murray Darling Local Government Association as approved.
- ii) Continue to trade as the Murray Darling Association.

M Rebbeck / J MacAllister

Carried

6 GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 MDA Communication Reports

Date	Report No	Topic	Author	Approved
03/03/2020	03032020	Inquiry into the Management of MDB Water Resources. Shepparton	Gemma Wilson	E. Bradbury
24/02/2020	(TSB024/20)	Basin Community Leadership Program MDBA & Water NSW	Tony Banks	E. Bradbury
16/03/2020	(TSB025/20)	MDA Strategic Planning Workshop Delegates Report	Emma Bradbury	E. Bradbury
18/03/2020	18032020	Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy Meeting	James Marshall	E. Bradbury

J MacAllister noted a minor correction for the “Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy Meeting” Report and updated the board that she will through her notes for circulation.

M Rebbeck noted that she spoke to T Banks regarding BCLP and the impacts of COVID-19.

T Banks provided an update to the board regarding BCLP and continuity planning.

7. CLOSE at 2.01pm