



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Ordinary Meeting of the Board Meeting 400 Monday 20th July 2020

MINUTES - MEETING No. 400

1. ATTENDANCE

Meeting declared open at 10.35am

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 Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Region 7
Cr Brian Lockyer	Barunga West Council	Region 8
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

1.2. Apologies:

Cr Phyllis Miller Forbes Shire Council Region 10

Motion: That apologies be noted

J Campbell / B Lockyer

Carried

1.3. Declarations

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1. [Meeting 399](#) held via Zoom Calendar Monday 15th June 2020

Motion: That the minutes of board meeting 396 are approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

S O'Toole / M Rebbeck

Carried

3. REPORTS

3.1. Chairman's report
D Thurley provided a brief chairman's report.

D Thurley noted that the upcoming Region 1 meeting has had to be postponed, due to many Region 1 councils based in Victoria. D Thurley also noted that the Hume dam is now over 45% and n just hope that we get more rain continuing.

3.2. Finance reports

3.2.1. Finance reports June 2020

P George provided a comprehensive financial report. P George also noted that the MDA will see an increase in coming months because of membership renewals.

Motion: That the finance reports are noted.

P Raison / S O'Toole

Carried

3.2.2. 2020 Audited Financial Report

The board are presented with the 2020 financial reports, duly audited by MGR Accountants. These reports reflect the newly amended financial year, concluding 31st of March 2020.

Motion: That the board

(a) adopt the 2020 Audited Financial Reports and

(b) that the Chair and Treasurer authorise the application of their digital signature for finalisation and inclusion in the 2020 Annual Report.

D Thurley / B Lockyer

Carried

E Bradbury thanked and acknowledged P George's incredible and tireless work in supporting the Murray Darling Association through support of staff and the preparation of management reports.

3.3. Chief Executive Officers report

In addition to the CEO's report, E Bradbury highlighted some of the positive outcomes discussed in the CEO's report, including the presentation of the draft strategic plan (*Vision 2025*) and the launch of the Basin Communities Leadership Program.

3.4. Region reports

Region 2

Cr Dennis Patterson: *It's been pretty busy in Region 2. We've had a couple of motions have come through to the office for the AGM, following a long process of the motion being approved at the region and then going back to each individual council to come up with the resolutions from the council. Shepparton itself are working on the conference and started work on the production of the study tour videos. It's been a busy time and it's only getting busier.*

Region 5

Cr Peter Raison: *I would like to apologise. I've been under the pump with COVID-19 but we seem to be getting back online.*

Region 6

Cr Melissa Rebbeck: *The next Region 6 Executive and Ordinary Meetings will be held on Friday 7 August 2020 at Goolwa, Alexandrina Council. I recently attended the Alexandrina Sustainable Round Table Discussion Group meeting on 18th of June and the Coorong Lower Lakes and Murray Mallee Community Advisory Panel meeting on the 25th of June. Region 6 is looking forward to work with the MDA National in organising and hosting the postponed MDA Basin Communities*

Region 7

Cr Andrew Tilley: *We had a region meeting last Thursday night, and Emma joined for the CEO report. At this meeting, we had the first official attendance from Port Adelaide Enfield Council, which have been a long-term member. We had a report from Deana Mildren who is the community engagement from the MDBA as well as a presentation from Ray Najar with his plan for the Lower Mouth to try to reduce the salinity in the Coorong, and also to reduce the silting up of the Murray Mouth.*

E Bradbury also noted that Cr Tilley has been re-elected to chair Region 7 for another year, maintaining continuity and expertise is always very valuable. Region 7 also moved a motion commending NSW and Minister Pavey on completion and submission of Water Resource Plans and acknowledging the challenges of the jurisdiction as compared to other jurisdictions.

Region 8

Cr Brian Lockyer: *I submitted a letter I received about my inquiry to the Minister of Water, which was then referred to Water SA about my concerns on water security distribution within the state. I got a favourable response which I forwarded to Emma, and we are doing further communications in regards to that.*

Region 9

Cr Paul Maytom: *We had a region meeting last month and we had a good attendance, with around 18 people there. Claire Miller, from Claire Miller Consulting, spoke about water issues and gave us a better understanding of what's happening out there. A lot of reports are being done, that we don't necessarily have the answered to. I was really pleased to have councillors attend and discuss a succession plan.*

Region 10

Emma Bradbury, on behalf of Cr Phyllis Miller: *Region 10 meeting is coming up this month and the chair invited Minister Pavey to attend and will address the Region 10 meeting.*

Region 11

Cr John Campbell: *We had a Basin Communities Leadership Program meeting last week to start the ball rolling to get the Collarenebri session. Also, we had the first part of the water forum last Thursday with NSW. We had Minister Pavey, Jim Bentley and Stuart Khan present - all very good speakers and I will provide a report for that later on. Our next meeting is going to be in Region 12 in Goondiwindi. Region 12 Chair Sam O'Toole will hopefully come along to that one.*

Region 12

Cr Sam O'Toole: *As John mentioned, I'm hoping to attend the R11 meeting and after that, hopefully call a Region 12 meeting.*

3.5. Communication and Briefing reports

3.5.1 July Delegates Report

The July Delegates Report is now approved for distribution for tabling by all delegates at their council meetings.

Motion: That the reports are noted.

J Campbell / D Patterson

Carried

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1. Correspondences Out

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.1.1	CSIRO	Collaborative Relationship Agreement
4.1.2	City of Port Adelaide Enfield	Membership
4.1.3	Mr Matt Cahill Deputy Secretary Dept of Agriculture, Water & Environment	Invitation to all Basin Ministers to attend the MDA 76 TH National Conference
4.1.4	Mr Matt Cahill – Chair Basin Officials Committee– Dept of Ag, Water & Environment – MDB Local Government and Communities	Centre of Excellence
4.1.5	Ms Kaia Hodge Regional Water Strategies – NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment.	Extension to closing dates
4.1.6	The Hon. Shaun Leane Minister for Local Government, Victoria	Congratulations on appointment
4.1.7	One Basin CRC	Cooperative Research Centre Partner Declaration

4.2 Correspondences In

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.2.1	Cr Thurley	Congratulation letter from Neil & Carolyn Andrew – Queens Birthday Award
4.2.2	The Hon Melinda Pavey MP & DPIE	from Namoi Unlimited
4.2.3	Hon. Keith Pitt	responding to funding request
4.2.4	Cr Thurley	Congratulations letter from Richard Marsh - Queens Birthday Awards

In addition to the above correspondences, E Bradbury noted that as part of the One Basin CRC process, the MDA CEO has been nominated to chair the Hub Advisory Committee.

E Bradbury also noted the correspondence from Minister Pitt’s office, reflecting that that no funding is available for the Centre of Excellence. E Bradbury would like to recommend to the board that this effectively closes out the tasking of the executive to seek out business-as-usual funding from the government.

M Rebbeck asked whether the One Basin CRC would provide some of the benefits of the Centre of Excellence, including the collaboration of key stakeholders.

E Bradbury said absolutely.

B Lockyer noted that he would like to congratulate D Thurley on his award, on behalf of Region 8.

Motion: That the Board receive correspondence.

D Thurley / B Lockyer

Carried

5 BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 Review of actions table

MDA Matters in Progress arising from previous Meetings

Board reviewed the motions arising and actions completed in detail from previous board meetings

E Bradbury noted the contribution of board members at previous board meetings has been invaluable and resulted in incredible outcomes.

J MacAllister clarified that Item 398 - 3.2.1 - 5.2 referred to her suggestion of the Strategic Advisory Committee reviewing the *Climate change risk to Australia's Built Environment* to see if the MDA could adopt any of the report into its strategic outlook.

Action: MDA Executive to provide briefing notes to the board regarding the development of MDA position statement (Item 398 3.2.3 – 6.2).

Motion: That the Board note updates

J MacAllister / J Campbell

Carried

5.2 Strategic Plan – Vision 2025

The culmination of almost 2 years of consultation and engagement has defined the identity, the purpose and the vision of the MDA well into the future. The MDA executive are proud to present the draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025 *Murray Darling Association: VISION 2025* for your adoption.

The MDA will organise a facilitated workshop for board members to see what operational actions need to be taken to achieve the outcomes of the strategic plan.

M Rebbeck noted that the Murray Darling Association: VISION 2025 is a great plan and congratulated everyone involved.

M Rebbeck asked for more details regarding monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, M Rebbeck noted she would like to see more about action change and practice on the ground.

M Rebbeck also noted a risk in board continuity as board members are elected yearly.

D Patterson agreed regarding the risk in the lack of continuity for board members and noted that it takes board members time to feel ownership of the position. D Patterson suggested that board members could hold the position for 2 years.

Cr Raison noted that it is a big step up from being a member to being a chair and also agreed that board members should hold the position for a minimum of 2 years.

Cr Thurley also noted that council elections play a role in the continuity of a board. However, D Thurley also noted that one of the strengths of the MDA is that we retain board members.

E Bradbury suggested that the workshop would be a great opportunity for discussion of the above items and to better develop the operationalisation of this plan.

Motion: That the Board:

- a) adopt the Strategic Plan – Vision 2025
- b) approve a public launch of the document.
- c) Conduct a workshop to discuss operational and monitoring & evaluation components of the plan, facilitated by Karen Legge

D Thurley / J MacAllister

Carried

E Bradbury noted her appreciation for all the board members and staff in their involvement and contribution to the strategic plan.

J MacAllister noted thanks on behalf of the board to E Bradbury and the staff for their hard work in completing the strategic plan and commended the great result which will move the MDA forward into the future.

5.3 Basin Communities Leadership Program – The MDA Academy: our online learning portal

After extensive development and production, the online learning component for the program is now complete. Board members are invited to beta test the platform to develop their own awareness and provide feedback.

The MDA Academy contains 5 learning modules – all carefully selected from the world’s leading education providers to create a bespoke learning experience just for our Basin Communities Leadership Program participants.

Action: That the Board enrolls in the online program and complete the modules to test the user experience.

E Bradbury invited board members to log on and provided a brief review.

E Bradbury also noted that the final questions and reflections questions will be further developed in collaboration with the lead facilitator Kate MacMaster at Peter Cullen Trust.

5.4 76TH National Virtual Conference – Registration Landing platform and Presenter briefing

The CVENT online registration platform is currently under production, over the next couple of weeks, the platform will go live whereby delegates will be able to register their interest in participating in the very first MDA Virtual Conference

The program is now nearing completion with several exciting, high calibre speakers already secured for this event. CEO spoke to the list of presenters.

Please note at **Board Meeting 387 – Item 5.2 (b)** it was resolved to:

b) Provide free registration to the MDA National Conference to all Regional Chairs or their duly appointed proxy commencing 2020.

5.5 One Basin CRC

The Australian Government’s Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program supports Australian industries’ ability to compete and produce by helping industry partner with the research sector to solve industry-identified issues.

Flying minute – Friday 26th June 2020 recommended: That the board approve

- i) the Murray Darling Association proceed to partnership agreement with the One Basin Co-operative Research Centre bid as per terms attached,
- ii) public acknowledgement of the Murray Darling Association’s status as a partner in the bid
- iii) that the bid details remain confidential until the matter is deemed to be no longer confidential.

Motion: That the board ratify the flying minute as resolved.

P Raison / J MacAllister

Carried

5.6 Release of confidential Items

During the development and negotiation of the following items the board resolved to deem the items confidential.

As the project agreements have taken effect and are now complete, the project opportunities are no longer needed to be retained and deemed confidential.

Motion: That the board resolve that from **Board Meeting 394 items 5.3, Project Opportunities**

5.3.1 – Partnership Agreement CSIRO

5.3.2 – One Basin CRC

5.3.3 Wentworth Group of concerned Scientists
are no longer deemed confidential.

J MacAllister / D Thurley

Carried

5.7 MDA Science and Education Advisory Subcommittee

Board Meeting 399 item 6.2

Action: That the board review the draft Science and Education Subcommittee Terms of Reference and provide feedback via email to be discussed at the next meeting of the board.

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

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

J MacAllister congratulated E Bradbury on this wonderful opportunity and inquired about the process of becoming involved in the MDA Science and Education Advisory Subcommittee.

5.8 Briefing Paper – Engagement with Department of Planning and Environment

See briefing paper attached for briefing notes on this item.

Motion: That the MDA continue to work with the Acting Manager of Water Relationships, DPIE Water Group Peter Hansen, and with the Department to

- a) Notify our networks and communities of upcoming consultation and engagement activities scheduled by the DPIE
- b) Urge NSW DPIE to revise its Water Stakeholder and Community Engagement Policy to more actively involve and collaborate with communities, as described in the IAP2 Spectrum.
- c) Invite NSW DPIE to collaborate with the MDA in the development of an agreed community consultation standard.

P Raison / J Campbell

Carried

J MacAllister suggested that the MDA formulate an engagement and consultation framework to present to all state and federal departments.

D Thurley discussed the recent article written by Kerry Brewster about floodplain harvesting in NSW and the legal action that might occur in relation to that. D Thurley noted that there is a lot of action occurring in this space – complicated, a lot of players involved and there will be a lot of work involved to fix this up.

E Bradbury recommended that the MDA note the action and acknowledge the process underpinning it, and reflect that where statute may be wanting, common law may pick it up.

J MacAllister noted the *Northern Basin First Flush* Assessment initial draft report has been released, which highlighted the lack of transparency and supports calls for a complete audit & monitoring and measuring of all water extraction in the Basin. J MacAllister also highlighted that there is opportunity to respond by the 9th of August.

J MacAllister also noted three bills that have been reviewed in the upper house in NSW, one of them around declaration of politician's water holdings interest, and the other two about floodplain harvesting amendment.

J MacAllister also noted that later this year the senate will have a committee into foreign investment against the national interest and the MDA should consider whether to provide a submission related to water.

A Tilley also commented on the MDA's statement about the article in the guardian on May 29 and noted that the press releases talks a lot about floodplain harvesting issue and explains it in a good way. Hugely serious issue.

M Rebbeck requested that J MacAllister circulate the above reports.

6. GUEST PRESENTERS

6.1 Presentation – Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust – Basin Communities Leadership Program Delivery Partners

Tom Mollenkopf – CEO and Kate MacMaster – Programs Director provided a 10-minute presentation followed by a 10-minute engagement discussion with the Board.

As delivery partners for the Basin Communities Leadership Program, this presentation will provide a brief history on the organisation and how the organisation succinctly aligns with the MDA.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 MDA Privacy Policy

The draft MDA Privacy Policy was provided to the board for review and approval.

Motion: That the board:

- (a) Note the MDA Privacy Policy
- (b) Schedule for further review and consultation in 12 months

J MacAllister / S O'Toole

Carried

E Bradbury commended James Marshall on his work on the privacy policy, as well as his recent completion of his Certificate 4 in Business Administration while continuing to deliver his work at the MDA in an efficient, timely and outstanding manner.

7. Items from the Regions.

Our Region: Informing the Board Agenda

P Maytom discussed the NRAR groundwater extraction audit "Operation Drawdown", which found that almost 10 per cent of bores in the area may be non-compliant. P Maytom emphasised that Basin communities need confidence that allocations that are determined are known around true numbers, and not conveyance losses.

P Maytom also wanted to better understand WaterNSW's *20 Year Infrastructure Options Study*, and its current progress.

J MacAllister agreed with P Maytom's comments on groundwater and noted the Region 4 experience. J MacAllister also voiced concern over the scientific measurement of amount of water extracted, and how many of those bores are operational.

The MDA notes with some concern the findings of the NRAR audit that finds excess extractions and urge all governments to ensure that we have transparency of baseline water records and compliance with existing.

E Bradbury noted that Queensland also has a detailed water infrastructure future-focused plan that was developed

and released in 2018.

Meeting closed 12.20pm.