



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Meeting 404

Monday 16th November 2020

MINUTES - MEETING No. 404

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 Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Region 7
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Council	Region 11
Mayor Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Pete George	M&S Group	Treasurer
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO

1.2. Apologies:

Cr Phyllis Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Cr Brian Lockyer	Barunga West Council	Region 8

E Bradbury noted that Region 8 had requested that a recording of the meeting be forwarded to Cr Lockyer and CEO Maree Wauchope in lieu of attendance. This request was approved.

Motion: That the apologies are received and noted.

J Campbell / P Maytom

Carried

1.3. Declarations

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1. [Meeting 403](#) held via Zoom Calendar Monday 19th October 2020

Motion: That the minutes of board meeting 403 are approved as an accurate record of that meeting, following clarification of 5.3.

J MacAllister / P Maytom

Carried

3. REPORTS

3.1. Chairman's report

D Thurley noted his recent trip to Canberra with E Bradbury, which included meetings with government ministers and department heads. He particularly noted that it was pleasing that notwithstanding he had met Sir Angus Houston in Albury a few weeks ago, the MDBA had been keen to meet again.

D Thurley also noted that there was an emphasis on how to improve consultation processes during these discussions. There is an opportunity for the MDA to work more closely with government and provide support.

3.2. Finance reports

P George provided a comprehensive summary of the finance reports.

J MacAllister asked P George about the MDA's future proof measures regarding the employee leave account.

P George said the MDA has future proofed the organisation with regards to cashflow impacts arising from employee drawdown on entitlements.

E Bradbury noted that finance report was sobering but also noted that the report is genuinely reflective of the commitment by the MDA of this last year to go hard or go home.

E Bradbury commented that the MDA has invested an enormous amount in establishing a vision and delivering the conference that will pay off for years to come. E Bradbury also noted that the report indicates really clearly how important the next 12 months are for building the financial resources of the organisation.

E Bradbury also noted that the accounts receivable report is an absolute credit to MDA staff member Cathy for her work in membership invoicing, management of accounts receivable and customer relationship management.

J MacAllister noted the Wentworth Rotary Club included in the finances and enquired about their membership status.

E Bradbury noted that they purchased DVDs.

A Tilley asked about individual members and noted that Region 7 has quite a lot of individual members who are valuable contributors to the region.

3.3. Chief Executive Officers report

E Bradbury provided a comprehensive report, particularly highlighting the recent trip to Canberra with national president D Thurley, and funding opportunities. A summary is provided below.

E Bradbury noted that meetings included:

- the signing of the **CSIRO / MDA Relationship Agreement** with key representatives from the CSIRO, and included discussions of future key projects to undertake which would benefit Basin communities.
- Meeting with **MDBA chair Sir Angus Houston and Chief Executive Phillip Glyde** with discussions regarding the MDA/MDBA commitment to work together on matters of shared objectives under the Memorandum of

Understanding.

- Meeting with **Ramzi Jabbour, Office of the Inspector General**, to discuss Office's role in auditing and compliance, as well as the future of the Office of the Inspector General
- Met with **Will Howard, Department of Agriculture**, who presented to the MDA's AGM in Tumut in 2014. Will is now with the department of Agriculture and is very focussed on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Opportunities to collaborate in the future.
- Met with **The Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Minister for the Environment**, and discussed the need for a consistent consultation standard and workplan, local government's role in the decision-making framework and the launch of the MDA's Vision 2025.
- Met with **The Hon. Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government**, and **The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development**, with discussions focussed on the proposed MDA name-change and the launch of Vision 2025.
- Met with the **Bureau of Meteorology** who sought MDA input in terms of consultation and better understanding what our members are seeking in terms of water information for the development of an app.
- Met with **Department of Agriculture Water and Environment Ms Lyn O'Connell (Deputy Secretary)** and **Ms Rachel Connell (First Assistant Secretary)** to discuss the inclusion of local government in decision making processes, including at the BOC and Ministerial Council. E Bradbury has also been asked to contribute to the Community Investments Package (MDBEDP Round 3) Guidelines and sought feedback from the board.
- Met with **Jody Swirepik, Commonwealth Environment Water Holder**, and discussed the Basin Communities Leadership Program, Macquarie Marshes – Burrima and MDA 2020 National Conference motions. E Bradbury commended the CEWO on how it understands regional communities and its willingness to identify solutions.
- Met with **Shadow Minister Terri Butler**, for a broad ranging briefing and background about what's happening around the Basin.
- Met with **Senator Perin Davey** and discussed the role of local government in representing the diversity of interests and values within their local communities.
- Met with **Rene Woods and Grant Rigney from MLDRIN** informally and discussed values and strategic alignment.

Additionally, E Bradbury noted that the MDBA recently held their peak briefing, which was informative, collaborative and extremely valuable.

P Maytom asked for further information about projects regarding bypassing the Barmah Choke, and cited his attendance at a recent Murrumbidgee Irrigation meeting where they were pushing ahead with a project. P Maytom noted his grave concerns about process and lack of information in the public sphere.

E Bradbury recommended to write to the Department and express those concerns and request further information in relation to projects.

P Maytom agreed and moved the motion.

Motion: That the MDA write to Murrumbidgee Irrigation and the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, and to the NSW Dept Planning, Industry and Environment to seek more information about Barmah Choke projects.

P Maytom / J MacAllister

Carried

E Bradbury then briefed the board on the *Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilience Research and Adoption Program for Drought Resilience and Innovation Hubs*. E Bradbury noted that this funding opportunity aligns very directly with the Centre for Excellence outlined in Vision 2025.

Additionally, E Bradbury noted that there is strategic alignment in undertaking funding applications in collaboration with Regional Organisations of Councils, including for example Region 11's Border Regional Organisation of Councils.

Action: M Rebbeck noted that it may be useful for the MDA to approach Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP and discuss her water research institute initiative.

D Patterson expressed concern regarding internal capacity of the MDA staff to complete multiple applications in the time-frame.

E Bradbury noted that the funding application would be prioritised due to its alignment to Vision 2025 and that some of the work will be outsourced.

Motion: That Chairman's Report and CEO's report are noted

D Thurley / Maytom

Carried

3.4. Region reports

Region 2

Dennis Patterson: *We are having our AGM next month. As you probably know, I didn't nominate for elections in Victoria so I'll be stepping down. I've really enjoyed my time at the MDA. In region 2, we have a succession plan and the region has become active. I did see on correspondence that Federation Council is moving to Region 2. They are motivated so I'm sure the region will continue to thrive.*

D Thurley thanked D Patterson for his contribution during the past few years and noted that he will be missed.

J MacAllister moved the following motion.

Motion: That the MDA board thank and note best wishes to former councillor D Patterson who has reinvigorated Region 2.

J MacAllister / P Raison

M Rebbeck wished D Patterson all the best and to stay in touch.

E Bradbury commended D Patterson for his outstanding legacy of emphasising local knowledge as a national priority and his leadership for Region 2 as well as the 2020 national conference.

Region 4

Cr Jane MacAllister: *No MDA Region 4 meetings have been held in the last month. Wentworth Shire Council's Mayor, Melisa Hederics resigned from Council citing personal and health reasons. Council held an Extraordinary Meeting on Monday 9 November where Councillor Susan Nichols was elected Mayor, and Councillor Tim Elstone remains as Deputy Mayor. We also have a council meeting on Wednesday, and there'll be more on that later. The other thing is last Thursday, Council had a briefing around floodplain harvesting report from Slattery & Johnson about a research project that they've done. I would certainly commend this group to seek a similar briefing.*

Region 5

Cr Peter Raison: *We had a meeting on the 26th October, where Emma joined us via Zoom. There was positive feedback about the AGM and we were represented by all members which was good. We had Tim Smythe chat to us about our water position paper, which we've now created a working group and are meeting on Wednesday this week. We had a presentation from Deana Mildren from the MDBA to receive updates and we worked a bit on our climate ready communities statement, and hopefully have that done at our next meeting.*

Region 6

Cr Melissa Rebbeck: *I would like to introduce our new executive officer Nathan Bicknell. It's great to have him on board as support for region 6. We have had a couple of membership applications for region 6, as outlined below. Region 6 Ordinary Meeting was held on 6 November 2020 at Murray Bridge, Rural City of Murray Bridge. Topics discussed at the Ordinary meeting included:*

- *Welcome of the new 0.5 FTE Executive Officer for Region 6: Nathan Bicknell.*
- *Dr Tony McLeod (General Manager of the SDL Accounting & Aboriginal Partnerships Program in the Basin Plan Regulation Portfolio at the MDBA) presented on Floodwater Harvesting.*
- *Tim Smythe (CEO Murraylands and Riverland LGA) presented on the Water Position Paper, and the implementation of a Working Group with Region 5 and 6 members.*
- *The timing and potentially combining Region 6's Symposium and Barrage Tour with the planned Basin Communities Leadership Program – Lower Lakes Workshop early 2021.*
- *The next Region 6 Ordinary Meeting and AGM will be held on 5 February 2021 in Tailem Bend (Coorong District Council).*

Events and activities

- *SA MDA Regions will be meeting on 18 November 2020 with Sir Angus Houston, Chairman of the Murray Darling Basin Authority.*
- *The Coorong and Lower Lakes community celebrated a major milestone with 10 years of continuous connectivity between the River Murray and Coorong following the Millennium Drought. The local community held a celebration event on 23 October at Goolwa barrage to mark the 10-year milestone, which coincided with World Fish Migration Day.*
- *As outlined above, Region 6 will be working closely with the MDA to discuss the best timing of the Basin Communities Leadership Program – Lower Lakes Workshop; and how it may be possible to link this with the planned Region 6's Symposium and Barrage Tour.*

Key Issues and Opportunities

When appropriate, Region 6 will continue to advocate for the Murray Darling Basin, including but not limited to advocacy letters to State and Federal Ministers.

Region 7

Cr Andrew Tilley: *We have meeting on the 26th of November. We've invited the CEO to come to that. We are also in the very early stages of planning a regional South Australia combined meeting at LGA House on the 26th of February. Everyone is welcome to that. I will provide more details in the future. I have met Minister Speirs recently, the Minister for Water, and he has offered to come and speak at that meeting. I went to an MDBA meeting in Mannum, and that was interesting. I went there with the express purpose of having better contact with irrigators. I've invited Karen Martin from Renmark, Murray Irrigators, to come speak at our combined meeting. We have access to a lot of great speakers here. We want to broaden of all things around Basin issues and region issues.*

Region 8 (written report)

Cr Brian Lockyer: *As Region 8 meeting will not be held until 11 Dec there is little to note. I have Melissa Rebbeck and Amy Czura from SA water doing a 10-minute chat and followed by questions. Until then that is all.*

Region 9

Cr Paul Maytom: *We need to align with government agencies. it's important that we've had recent discussion about the Water NSW 20 year infrastructure study to try and better understand what's happening there and align with what's happening there. If you can keep in touch with Bridget on this - it's important. I've also received an email today from a chief executive of an Australian agriculture company and he's saying here that he's spoken with Phillip Glyde and he's met with Angus Houston and they are both looking at potential opportunities to look back into the Lake Coolah project. Considering I spent quite some years on this project and we walked away from it because there was no available water, it's absolutely vital for you Emma to connect through to Phillip Glyde and Angus Houston to see what potential opportunities there are.*

Region 11

Cr John Campbell – *We had our quarterly meeting on Friday at Bingara and the main things out of that were name change and boundary change, which our member councils will get a submission back to me before the end of January for discussion at the strategic planning meeting.*

Motion: That the Region Reports be received and noted.

P Maytom / J Campbell

Carried

3.5. Communication and Briefing reports

3.5.1 Delegates Report

3.5.2 Board Members attendance at AGM as requested J. MacAllister

Motion: That the Board Members attendance at AGM report is noted

D Thurley / P Maytom

Carried

3.5.3 MDA ACCC feedback submission

E Bradbury noted that it is an absolute pleasure to make submissions based on hard work and content developed by the membership over several years of motions at AGMs, board meetings, region meeting and council meetings, proving that the MDA's model for engagement and reporting is robust and comprehensive.

E Bradbury also commended James and Adam for their work in the research going into this report.

Motion: That the ACCC submission be received and noted.
D Thurley / P Maytom

Carried

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1. Correspondences Out

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.1.1	Wentworth Shire Council	Pooncarie Weir on the Darling River

Cr MacAllister noted that she had not received this correspondence, and that the correspondence appeared to have been incorrectly addressed to herself and Mr Hall rather than Mr Ross.

Action: MDA executive to check that correspondence to Wentworth Shire Council was correctly addressed to the GM and received.

4.2 Correspondences In

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.2.1	The Hon Michael McCormack MP	National Water Grid Authority
4.2.2	Federation Council	Inclusion in Region 1 & 2 MDA

Motion: That the Board receive correspondence.
D Thurley / P Raison

Carried

5 BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 Review of actions table

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

Motion: That the Board note updates
D Thurley/ P Maytom

Carried

5.2 Election of President/Vice President/Treasurer

Clarification of Election discussion from **Board Meeting 403 – Item 5.3 Election of Board Executive**.
Election of the Board Executive at Board Meeting 403 was unclear in its resolution as to the election of two vice president/s.

As there is no provision in the constitution for two vice presidents, the minutes reflected the precedent established in 2019 when the board elected to appoint a vice president and a deputy vice president.

The resolution is not an agreed reflection of the discussions as it occurred. Clarification from the board was requested.

E Bradbury noted that following last year's leadership election, she reviewed the constitution regarding the governance around two vice-presidents. E Bradbury noted that while the constitution does require the election of a president, vice president and treasurer, it does not preclude the election of two vice presidents. E Bradbury noted that there is a provision there that allows the board to make decisions for the good governance of the MDA.

J MacAllister suggested that in terms of governance, the MDA needs to develop a more robust procedure regarding nominating and election/appointment of the board executive.

M Rebbeck asked for clarification regarding the geographical boundaries for the Northern Basin and Southern Basin Vice President roles. E Bradbury recommended that the MDA's use of the terms Northern Basin and Southern Basin should reflect that already in use by Basin governments, the MDBA and the community.

Action: MDA executive to develop a procedure for board executive, for adoption at board level

Action: MDA executive to distribute a [link to the MDBA Map](#) outlining the Northern Basin and Southern Basin respectively.

Motion: That the board confirm the election two vice-presidents including a vice president (Northern Basin) and vice president (Southern Basin), being Cr Melissa Rebbeck and Cr John Campbell respectively.

D Thurley / D Patterson

Carried

In addition, J MacAllister asked for clarification regarding the nomination of Cr Campbell. As a result, D Thurley noted that he had nominated Cr Campbell, and moved to reaffirm that nomination.

Motion: That Cr Campbell be appointed as vice president (Northern Basin)

D Thurley / P Raison

Carried

5.3 MDA Name Change Consultation Strategy and Briefing Paper

Further to Motion 5.18 of the AGM 2020, and actions arising from Board meeting 403 Item 5.5, in relation to the detailed Murray Darling Association Change of Name Consultation and Engagement Strategy, along with the Change of Name Briefing Paper

Motion: That the board:

- i) Note the attached Murray Darling Association Change of Name Engagement Strategy
- ii) Approve use of the Change of Name briefing paper in consultation with region members
- iii) Engage with members at their upcoming region meetings.

M Rebbeck / P Maytom

Carried

J MacAllister requested a list of paid MDA members to better understand the membership make-up of the MDA. E Bradbury noted that a current list is printed in the latest Annual Report.

Action: MDA executive to provide a current list of members to our board.

5.4 Regional Boundary Update

Correspondence received from **Federation Council** requesting the formal transfer to Region 2 and requesting to remain as an associate member of Region 1.

This process is consistent with the principle of the Regional boundary review that councils are aligned as communities of interest and issues.

Motion: That the Board

- a) Approve the request from Federation Council for transfer to region 2 and associate membership of Region 1.
- b) Note that the change will not incur fee's or charges.
- c) Continue to consider and examine options for Regional Boundary Reviews.,

D Thurley / M Rebbeck

Carried

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Regional Water Position Papers

The MDA executive have continued to explore models and elements to optimize the efficacy of the operations and alignments of our regions. Options include building, and potentially formalizing stronger relationships between MDA Regions and their regional LGA counterparts to deliver better value to shared councils and stakeholders, particularly in the development of regional priorities and position statements. MRLGA in collaboration with Regions 5 and 6 has developed a strong Terms of Reference which is commended as an excellent model.

Motion: That the board

- a) note the MRLGA ToR
- b) refer the matter to the SAG for further consideration and recommendation of next steps for the board.

J MacAllister / D Thurley

Carried

J MacAllister asked for clarification on D Patterson's voting rights noting that he is no longer an elected member.

D Patterson and E Bradbury clarified that Greater Shepparton Council is the member and by council resolution, D Patterson will remain chair until a new chair is elected at the Region 2 AGM in December 2020.

Action: MDA staff to draft a procedure to clarify the provisions for leadership after local government elections – as per AGM Motion 2018-5.10 for consideration by the Board.

6.2 Individual Membership Applications

*At the MDA Region 6 meeting on 6 November 2020 (held in Murray Bridge), the members of Region 6 received applications for Individual Members for Warren Jacobs and Colin Grundy, and made the following recommendation to the MDA Board: **That the applications will be accepted (Moved: Cr Scott; Seconded: Cr Qualmann; Carried unanimously).***

Region 6 Recommendation to the Board:

Pursuant Section 4 of the MDA Membership Procedure, the (outgoing) Region Secretary, Monika Rhodes, notifies the Board that the members of Region 6 recommended the applications for Individual Members for Warren Jacobs and Colin Grundy.

Note for Discussion: The name change process may have implication for the status of new member non council members. This should be considered before resolving this matter

Motion: That the Board accepts the Region Executive's recommendation, the Membership Services Officer will

promptly notify the applicant and the Region Chair that the applicants has become a Member of the

Region and the date from which that membership is effective.

D Thurley / D Patterson

Carried

M Rebbeck noted that the new memberships are part of a region 6 membership growing strategy to encourage diversity and different voices within the membership. M Rebbeck also spoke to the strength of these membership applications, outlining their personal and professional attributes.

M Rebbeck noted that the value of individual members is not necessarily about votes, but about better understanding the region.

D Patterson agreed, and noted the importance of growing individual membership to the organisation.

J MacAllister noted the important role that individuals play in informing the region due to their local knowledge. J MacAllister also noted that value for individual members is an important discussion for the board to have, noting that value may include access, input and influence, rather than voting.

A Tilley asked for clarification on voting rights for independent members currently.

E Bradbury noted that individual members are able to vote at region meetings and individual members have a right to vote at the national conference at the rate of 3 votes per region at national level, subject to nomination and appointment by the region.

6.3 Region 10A

E Bradbury noted that initial consultation regarding regional boundary realignment has indicated that Region 10 includes many diverse interests co-existing in a geographically large space, leading to difficulties in creating regional unity.

E Bradbury noted that Narromine Shire Council Mayor Craig Davies, who sat on the board as an interim for region 10 chair a couple of years ago, would welcome the opportunity to sit as an interim board member for region 10a, pending the completion of a regional boundary review.

D Thurley suggested that the board invite Mayor Craig Davies to attend the board meetings as a guest.

Motion: That the MDA invite Mayor Craig Davies to sit in at board meetings and provide input from region.

J MacAllister / D Thurley

Carried

7. MDA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

7.1 **Conference 2021** will become a standing agenda item across the course of the year. The MDA team has commenced engagement with Wentworth in the development of committee and workplan. The CEO to brief on study tour proposal. Updates monthly.

7.2 MDA National Conference 2022 - Location

The MDA aims to choose the location of its National Conference and AGM approximately 18 months before the event is to occur. It is appropriate to begin considering potential locations to hold the 2022 National Conference and AGM.

J Campbell noted that at its last region meeting Region 11 resolved to lodge an expression of interest hosting the MDA National Conference 2022.

D Patterson emphasised that the strength in MDA national conferences lies in knowledge and education and using the conference to highlight a specific regional issue.

D Thurley agreed, and noted the significance of delegates being able to visit locations such as Menindee Lakes.

A Tilley noted that each region has its own separate issues, including Adelaide, which would make an interesting national conference.

M Rebbeck noted that although Region 6 hosted the national conference 7 years ago, she would like to see Goolwa host it. M Rebbeck noted that a study tour could include better understanding the recent impacts of climate change including on the barrages, as well as the recovery process of the millennium drought including the ecological damage that hasn't been recovered.

It was agreed that all regions should be invited to prepare a bid / for national conference 2022.

Motion: That the board

- i) acknowledges the expression of interest by Region 11, and
- ii) invite expressions of interest from other regions by end of February 2021.

D Thurley / J Campbell

Carried

Action: The MDA executive to send out invitation pack to Regions mapping out the tender process, including the dates, selection criteria, and timelines.

8. Items from the Regions.

Our Region: Informing the Board Agenda

9. CLOSE at 12.32pm