



Chief Executive Officer's Report
July 2020

Emma Bradbury
ceo@mda.asn.au

1. Introduction

Amid the current uncertainty I had not expected to be writing an introduction so liberally peppered with superlatives. And yet - this has been an exciting and dynamic month of significant achievements that will chart the course for our organisation and our members for the years ahead.

The much anticipated final draft of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Murray Darling Association: *Vision 2025* is presented to the board for noting prior to being presented at the National Conference.

Vision 2025 represents the culmination of almost 2 years of consultation and engagement with you, our members, and stakeholders, and is the next step in defining the powerful identity, purpose, and vision of the MDA as we face a dynamic future ahead. I thank you for your incredible contribution to it.

In line with the themes identified in *Vision 2025*, the theme of the 76th National Conference has been announced.

Themed *Local Leadership: A National Priority*, the conference will be delivered as a fully virtual event and will explore the relationship between Basin councils and our national plans and priorities.

Severe drought and bushfires, evolving water markets, climate change, innovations in energy, agriculture, water infrastructure and now COVID-19 all form the backdrop to these extraordinary times. It has been my absolute privilege, and a testament to the importance of this national conversation to have attracted a breathtaking array of speakers for this event.

A stellar array of speakers will articulate their vision for The Murray-Darling Basin Plan, The National Water Infrastructure Development Fund, The 2030 Agriculture Plan; The National Energy Plan, including Snowy 2.0 and our National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy to work in harmony to maximise the benefits and opportunities for Basin communities into a sustainable, vibrant and prosperous future.

It is perhaps an even greater privilege to be working with this amazing team at the MDA who have been unwavering in their commitment and tireless in their work as we coordinate the conference, the AGM and the launch of the Basin Communities Leadership Program.

At a time when many organisations are, understandably, deferring their major events to 2021 we at the MDA will deliver an essential and ground-breaking conference as a fully virtual event. We continue to adjust to restrictions and advice as they arise to meet our commitment to the future leaders of the Murray-Darling Basin through the on-line and face-to-face delivery of the Basin Communities Leadership Program.

I am incredibly proud to announce that the MDA will partner with the prestigious Peter Cullen Trust, and organisation experienced in offering transformational programs for professionals in the water and environment sector, designed to strengthen leadership and communication skills empowering them to proactively contribute to a sustainable world. This will truly be a world-class leadership program.

We may well be set for challenging times ahead, but these are the times in which local leadership steps up to meet our national priorities.

2. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
15/06/2020	WGCS Round Table de-brief	Via Zoom
16/06/2020	Catalyse WA: Well-Being and Resilience mapping project	Via Zoom
17/06/2020	Peter Cullen Trust – BCLP Curriculum and logistical discussions	Via Zoom
17/06/2020	Strategic Advisory Group – Feedback re MDA Strategic Plan	Via Zoom
18/06/2020	CVENT – National Conference Platform Discussions	Via Zoom
18/06/2020	Greater Shepparton Council – National Conference discussions	Via Zoom
19/06/2020	Ramzi Jabbour – Inspector General’s Office	Via Zoom
19/06/2020	Balonne Shire Council – BCLP deliver – St. George & Dirranbandi	Via Zoom
25/06/2020	One Basin CRC	Via Zoom
25/06/2020	Secretariat Monthly Catch Up	Via Zoom
26/06/2020	Region 9 AGM and Ordinary Meeting	Via Zoom
26/06/2020	BCLP discussions with Berri Barmera Council	Via Zoom
29/06/2020	Peter Cullen Water Trust – BCLP Discussions	Via Zoom
29/06/2020	Board workshop to discuss MINCO	Via Zoom
29/06/2020	East Stirling Primary School – BCLP Participation	Via Zoom
02/07/2020	Skilled Advisory Group – Balranald Shire Council	Via Zoom
06/07/2020	NSW DPIE – Peter Hansen	Via Zoom
08/07/2020	BCLP Logistical discussions for Collarenebri – Walgett Council	Via Zoom
09/07/2020	MDBA Peak Groups briefing	Via Zoom
09/07/2020	National Conference Committee Meeting	Via Zoom

3. Meetings

02nd July 2020

Skilled Advisory Group for the Balranald Shire Council *Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Safe and Secure Domestic Water project*. The MDA have been invited to sit on the skilled advisory group for this important initiative. The delegate to that group is Policy Officer James Marshall who will use the opportunity to contribute his skills and experience, and to identify opportunities for the MDA to provide support to and benefit from the program.

25-06/2020 MDA has confirmed our commitment as a partner in the One Basin CRC Bid.

At the request of the Stirling East Stirling Primary School, the MDA will deliver a one-off Basin Communities Leadership Program for students and teachers of the Murray-Darling Basin Calling curriculum, in recognition and support of their outstanding work!

4. 76th National Virtual Conference – 14th – 16th September 2020

- Program Scheduling

The program is set for an incredible line up of talent and authority

- Sponsorship

With only 8 sponsorship opportunities available, sponsorships have been well contested with only a few places remaining.

- CVENT

Registrations will officially open on 1 August with our registrations page set to go live the week prior.

5. Basin Community Leadership Program

- MDA has finalised agreement to partner in the delivery of the program with the Peter Cullen Trust. Improving Australia's water and environmental management by enhancing the link between good science and effective policy making requires effective leadership skills, particularly around communicating in ways that brings science to life and makes it relevant for politicians and policy makers. Now entering into its tenth year, the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust is an independent, apolitical charitable trust offering transformational programs for professionals in the water and environment sector, designed to strengthen leadership and communication skills empowering them to proactively contribute to a sustainable world.
- The online learning component of the program is launched for the board to review. The MDA Learning Academy will provide the online learning component and has been designed using Go1 Platform.
- Mildura Dates continue to hold as we 'watch and act' in response to any further increase of lifting of Covid restrictions.

6. One Basin CRC

The MDA has committed as a partner in the One Basin Co-operative Research Centre bid.

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.

The One Basin CRC bid will be submitted in June 2020, as a Round 22 Stage 1 CRC application. If successful the CRC will be a ten-year \$150M+ collaboration that, through its diverse mix of partners, will deliver science based solutions that contribute to economic growth and benefit rural communities and the environment.

As an industry-led R&D consortium, the CRC brings a unique mix of committed partners from research, government, industry, farming and their supply chain, and technology sectors. These partners share the CRC's vision for a resilient and sustainable Murray-Darling Basin, powered by a strong innovation capacity that supports rural communities, businesses, and water managers to adapt and thrive with changing global drivers.

7. Operational Update

The public discovery of internal MDA documentation including items with confidential status through a breach in the backend of the MDA's website this month revealed a breach of privacy protocols and an absence of current policy. The breach was identified via the premature availability of the RAMJO Water Security Position Paper prior to its launch by RAMJO.

The breach was immediately resolved upon notification with operational measures securely put in place to avoid future breaches.

The breach has resulted in a change of format for the board briefing papers, with board briefing packs to be distributed as a fully integrated PDF. Confidential items will no longer be available via hyperlink but will be sent as appropriately marked PDF to board members' email.

A current privacy policy is scheduled for approval at this month's board meeting.

Emma Bradbury

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Bradbury', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Executive Officer