



# Board Meeting 422 MINUTES

**21 August 2023**

Murray Darling Association Incorporated  
ABN 64 636 490 493

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## Meeting Commencement Time

9:30am

## 1. Acknowledgement of Country

Murray Darling Association acknowledges the traditional owners & custodians of country and pay our respects to the people, cultures, and elders past, present, and emerging.

## 2. Attendance

### 2.1 Present

Delegate	Council	Region
Cr David Thurley	AlburyCity Council	Region 1
Cr Geoff Dobson	Greater Shepparton City Council	Region 2
<i>Vacant</i>		Region 3
Cr Jason Modica	Mildura Rural City Council	Region 4
Cr Andrew Kassebaum	Berri-Barmera Council	Region 5
Cr Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Region 7
<i>Vacant</i>		Region 8
Cr Glen Andrezza	Griffith City Council	Region 9
Mayor Jamie Chaffey	Gunnedah Shire Council	Region 11
Peter George	M&S Group	Interim Treasurer
Mark Lamb	MDA	CEO

### 2.2 Apologies

Delegate	Council	Region
Cr Airlie Keen	Rural City of Murray Bridge	Region 6
Mayor Craig Davies Campbell	Narromine Council	Region 10
Mayor Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12

### 2.3 Declarations

Delegate	Declaration

## 3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Refer to - Attachment 3

**CARRIED (G Dobson/J Chaffey)**

**That the minutes of MDA Board Meeting 421 held on 5 June 2023 be accepted as an accurate record.**

## 4. Reports

### 4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chair, D Thurley, provided their report verbally.

The Chair noted that the DCCEEW had undertaken IPSOS to provide information for a report to the DCCEEW. Indicated that, at some stage, the MDA will contact the Minister identifying the Department's desire to collect information from the MDA, but prefer to do this through third party entities such as IPSOS rather than engaging with the MDA directly.

The Chair indicated that he had been invited to partake in the Reconnecting River Country program.

The Chair noted the high levels of the Dartmouth and Hume dams, expressed caution, noting it could be precarious with any future rain.

**CARRIED (D Thurley/G Andreazza)**

**That the Chair's report be noted.**

*[J Modica joined 9:34am]*

### 4.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO, M Lamb, provided their report.

M Lamb noted recent engagement with councils in Region 11. Indicated that they were very pleased with the reception of councils met with Region 11 Chair. Indicated that the general message received by councils is that they see the value of Membership. It was really encouraging, and noted that the MDA needed to build on that.

M Lamb raised MDA Advocacy, noted that the MDA was still working on last year's Motions, as well as continuing to work on the motions of years past. Noted that while the deadline for the Motions for the 2023 AGM was 31 August, the MDA will still accept motions into early September. M Lamb noted that the MDA had had excellent opportunities for exposure such as the Legalwise Symposiums, One Basin CRC Conference, and the upcoming CSIRO conference in Brisbane.

*[P George joined 9:39am]*

M Lamb raised MDA Partnerships, noted that the MDA's partnerships were going very strong.

- One Basin CRC is starting to deliver tangible results.
- CSIRO was continuing to develop and providing continuous work.

M lamb raised the 2023 National Conference:

- Developing really well. Almost spoiled for choice with a substantial lineup of guest speakers. Reflected on the Welcome Reception, Study Tour, Conference Day 1, Conference Day 2, Gala Dinner.
- Noted that with the confirmation of Minister Plibersek, Minister Close has indicated that she would be interested in attending in person. Noted a fantastic range of Guest Speakers, a good balance of perspectives, including the Chair of the Almond Board of Australia.

D Thurley commended the Board Chairs to continue to promote the National Conference.

## Refer to Attachment 4.2

**CARRIED (D Thurley/G Andrezza)**

**That the CEO's report be noted.**

### 4.3 Finance Reports

The Treasurer, P George, provided the Finance reports.

P George noted major income differences between the past year and this year due to project completion payouts.

J Chaffey queried whether there was a likelihood of achieving the Money flagged with APWS.

- M Lamb noted that there was a high likelihood of achieving it this year, if not early quarter of 2024.

J Modica queried who APWS was.

- M Lamb clarified that APWS was Asia Pacific Waste Solutions. Noted that this project was regarding a Social Licence for a Waste to Energy Project in NSW.
  - J Modica noted that there was a lot of interest in Pyrolysis.
    - M Lamb noted that this was looking at Gasification, using a very low oxygen environment, converting the waste and generating energy in the process, as well as hydrogen.
  - G Dobson noted that GSCC are looking into going int partnership with a company in Melbourne turning nappies into kitty litter.

## Refer to Attachment 4.3

**CARRIED (D Thurley/G Dobson)**

**That the reports be noted.**

## 5. Correspondence

### 5.1 Incoming

M lamb noted that there had been a lot of correspondence, particularly with the preparation of the 2023 National Conference.

## Refer to Attachment 5.1

Date	Received From	Subject
25/5/2023	MDA Region 6	Life Membership Application – Frank Tuckwell OAM
25/5/2023	Claire Sibly, Assistant Commissioner – Productivity Commission	Invitation to join the PC's MDB Plan inquiry Working Group
25/5/2023	Matthew Hyde, CEO – City of Wodonga	RE: Invitation towards Membership of the Murray Darling Association
26/5/2023	Alecia Matthews-Tucker – Port Augusta	RE: Invitation to attend the National Conference
26/5/2023	Bridget Wetherall, Director Infrastructure & Environment, City of Ballarat	RE: Murray Darling Association Membership Invitation
26/5/2023	Mel Mathers, Executive Assistant – Gannawarra Shire Council	RE: Invitation towards Membership of the Murray Darling Association
29/5/2023	Natasha Childs, Manager Community Engagement and Communications - Department of Planning and Environment	Reconnecting River Country Advisory Committee invitation
29/5/2023	Dorothy Mohanta – LGAQ	RE: Invitation to attend the National Conference
29/5/2023	Sally Gray, Executive Assistant – Central Goldfields Shire Council	RE: Invitation to consider Membership of the Murray Darling Association 2023-2024

30/5/2023	Tanya Khanom – Sunshine Coast Council	RE: Invitation to attend the National Conference
30/5/2023	Hon Michael McCormack MP	Remittance Advice
31/5/2023	Phill Stone, Mayor – Whyalla City Council	RE: Membership on the Murray Darling Association
2/6/2023	Warren Shire Council	Remittance Advice
6/6/2023	City of Playford	RE: Invitation to consider Membership of the Murray Darling Association 2023-2024
8/6/2023	Indigo Shire Council Wentworth Shire Council	Remittance Advice
14/6/2023	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	Application for Exhibition Booth Sponsorship
19/6/2023	Mid Murray Council	Remittance Advice
22/6/2023	Liverpool Plains Shire Council	Remittance Advice
23/6/2023	National Resource Access Regulator	Application for Exhibition Booth Sponsorship
6/7/2023	Toowoomba Regional Council	Mayor Paul Antonio – Resignation as Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council
7/7/2023	Carol Muzyk	Individual Membership Application – Region 7
14/7/2023	NSW DPE Water Relations	Fish Deaths in Menindee – Community Update: 14 July 2023

## 5.2 Outgoing

### Refer to Attachment 5.2

Date	Issued to	Subject
22/5/2023	MDA Member Councils	Letter: 2023-24 Budget Summary
8/6/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mrs Deborah Frecklington – QLD Shadow Water Minister</li> <li>Hon Dr Nicola Centofanti MLC – SA Shadow Water Minister</li> <li>Ms Stephanie Cooke MP – NSW Shadow Water Minister</li> <li>Mr Tim McCurdy MP – VIC Shadow Water Minister</li> <li>Senator Perin Davey – Federal Shadow Water Minister</li> <li>Prof. Mike Stewardson – CEO, One Basin CRC</li> <li>Mr Brendan Guiney – EO, Water Directorate</li> </ul>	Invitation to attend and speak at the National Conference
16/6/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor Boan – City of Port Adelaide Enfield</li> <li>Mayor Monceaux – City of Burnside</li> <li>Mayor Were – City of Onkaparinga</li> <li>Mayor Wisdom – Adelaide Hills Council</li> </ul>	Scheduling a meeting with the MDA CEO and Region 7 Chair
3/7/2023	Department for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	MDA Submission of Recommendations for achieving the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
5/7/2023	MDA Member Councils, Non-Member Councils Media Entities	MEDIA RELEASE – 79 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
10/7/2023	Hon Susan Close MP	Invitation to prepare a prerecorded message to the 79 <sup>th</sup> National Conference.
17/7/2023	Prof. Mike Stewardson – One Basin CRC	MDA Recommendation of Mayor Samantha O’Toole – One Basin CRC Partner Forum

**CARRIED (D Thurley/G Dobson)**

**That the correspondence be received and noted.**

## 6. Business Arising

D Thurley proposed a Doodle Poll be distributed to ascertain the preferred date for MDA Board Chairs to schedule the Extraordinary Meeting and review submitted Motions for the 2023 AGM.

**ACTION:**

**T Phillips to distribute a Doodle Poll to MDA Board Chairs to schedule the Extraordinary Meeting.**

### 6.1 Board Resolution Register

The Board reviewed the motions and actions completed.

**Refer to Attachments 6.1**

## 7. General Business

### 7.1 Membership and Engagement

D Thurley noted that the CEO had reviewed MDA Membership and Engagement in the earlier CEO's Report.

### 7.2 Nomination – Life Membership: Mr Frank Tuckwell OAM

Region 6 supports the Life Membership application of Mr Frank Tuckwell OAM and recommends it to the Board of the Murray Darling Association.

A Tilley noted that F Tuckwell's experience and knowledge was unique, noting his history and age had allowed F Tuckwell to carry what many consider 'privileged knowledge.'

**Refer to Attachments 7.2.1**

**Refer to Attachments 7.2.2**

**CARRIED (J Modica/A Tilley)**

**That the Board consider the Life Member application of Mr Frank Tuckwell OAM.**

### 7.3 Application – Individual Membership: Carol Muzyk

The Individual Membership Application (Region 7) for Carol Muzyk is provided for consideration of the Board.

A Tilley noted his support for the Individual Membership Application.

**Refer to Attachments 7.3**

**CARRIED (D Thurley/A Tilley)**

**That the Board consider the Individual Member application of Carol Muzyk.**

## 7.4 Reports for Delegates

The report is provided for noting.

**Refer to Attachment 7.4**

## 7.5 Region Reports

Region Chairs to provide reports on their regions, including ongoing flood recovery, for noting.

### Region 7: A Tilley

- Noted that Region 7 was very grateful that the CEO could join him in Region 7 and engage with the councils of the Region. Noted that Region 7 continued to be strongly supported by its members, and was seeing slow, but steady growth in membership interest.

### Region 9: G Andrezza

- Noted Burrinjuck Dam water level was high, as was Blayney Dam.
- Noted that the river had come back down, with extra water being released.
- Indicated that it was interesting to see the change in the Management of the Dams, with them usually holding more airspace.
  - D Thurley noted that Region 1 had put forward a Motion earlier in the year seeking a review of the operating rules for Hume Dam.

### Region 2: G Dobson

- Noted Eildon Weir was at 95%
- Indicated that the GSCC Mayor and CEO were able to have a 1on1 with T Plibersek, put forth concerns on the 450GL. Indicated it was an incredible opportunity and resulted in the Mayor and CEO attending the conference with the hope of speaking with the Minister again.
- Noted it was good to see the Goulburn returning to normal water levels.
- Indicated that following a calibration of costs to the Council, the council is out just over \$500,000.00 due to the floods.

### Region 11: J Chaffey

- Thanked M Lamb for joining him in meeting with Region 11 councils, noted meeting with 10 Councils in 2 days.
  - Noted that meeting with New England Councils, and other non-member councils, with Water Security being a key concern. Noted that many of the Northern Councils have now been declared as in drought. Ground is dry and if there is no further rain crop yield will be affected.
  - Noted that the Border Rock of councils meet on a regular basis. Region 11 linking with its meetings and exploring the opportunity of hosting a joint Northern Basin Forum.

### Region 5: A Kassebaum

- Noted that with the quarterly meeting 2 weeks ago, Region 5 heard from the CEWH.
- Noted a lot of nervousness in the community regarding the 450GL. Noted concern that Minister Close believes there would be no hurt to communities from buy backs. Indicated that the current state of play when water becomes tight the wine industry would inevitably become the loser.



- Noted the Hydrogen project spoken of during BM 421, the draw of river water would only be used initially, not continuously. The only question is where the ongoing water would be coming from (Which allocation).
- Noted concern of any new permanent plantings in the region.
- Noted that because the region has changed its watering means from irrigators to drip, the salinity inflow into waterbodies has decreased. Concern is that with the new permanent planting this could change again.

#### **Region 4: J Modica**

- Noted that the wine growers were really concerned regarding buybacks and water availability. Noted that the Almond industry is working really hard to be 'good citizens'.
- Indicated that there were a number of small fish kills in the region with attempts to get more oxygen into the water.
- Noted that Region 4 had prepared a reworded motion from 2022 for the 2023 Conference. Would be happy to discuss and walk through it with the Board when discussing.
  - A Kassebaum noted that the cost of the floods for the council he was involved in was around \$2,000,000.00.
  - G Andrezza. Noted that he was looking at a dry time, just not sure of how long it lasts. Water security will be a big one.
- J Modica expressed that history showed that big droughts are often followed by big floods and vice versa.
  - J Chaffey noted that disaster relief funds are not flowing quickly. Noted looking at \$12,000,000.00. Noted that if the people were to borrow the money to address the issues there is very little chance of seeing the funds.

## **7.6 Review of Membership for the MDA**

That the Board of the Murray Darling Association consider and approve two types of membership for our association:

- Type 1: Riparian Membership.
- Type 2: Non-Riparian Membership.

M Lamb noted past MDA history, there were two tiers of Member councils: Riparian and Non-Riparian, that this had been reflected in two different Membership rates.

M Lamb noted that Cr Robin Coleman expressed the opinion that many memberships were dropped in the SA Regions was due to the dropping of the Membership tiers. M Lamb indicated that the membership loss was in part due to this, but also due to the lack of communication.

M Lamb noted that the discussion paper addressed the overall impact of the Riparian and Non-Riparian to the MDA across the Basin. Indicated that the debate is really centred around what the benefits were, and what the impacts of introducing a non-Riparian rate were.

D Thurley noted that, in his opinion, this was a non-issue, as the MDA wasn't solely about water.

A Tilley noted that this was an issue in front of his face all the time. Noted that the Mayors and CEOs spoken to in Region 7 wasn't the hard task, rather the hard task was to convince newly elected councillors, factoring in with tighter budgets and costs of living looking for a quick budget cut. Noted that many councils do not see their connection to the Basin system. Noted opinion that if the non-Riparian membership was introduced, the opportunity of drawing more members could see a

greater financial income from Regions 7 and 8 where membership was low. Implored the other regions to recognise that this issue was unique to SA.

A Kassebaum supported A Tilley, noted that there were councils in SA that rely completely on the Murray River/Basin. Cannot rely solely on facilities such as the Desalination Plant.

J Chaffey noted that he would speak against this. Noted two aspects: Financial and Membership. Expressed that, if you were to change the membership, this would need to be reflected in voting rights as well. Noted that while the MDA was doing great financially, the voice, discussion, and voting at the National Conference would need to reflect the reduced cost rate.

J Modica noted that this was a fantastic debate and should have been addressed in a strategic plan. Noted that he supported J Chaffey's comments of reflecting this. Noted that he felt a little challenged by this debate, that he saw and understood both sides. Queried how the MDA should proceed?

G Dobson noted that he still needed to review this. Need time to gain an opinion.

G Andrezza noted that he would speak against this. Noted that he supported J Chaffey's comments. Noted it was all about voting. If a member came in at a reduced rate, but still the same voting rights as Full paying members, that would raise a lot of heads.

- G Dobson noted that there would be a benefit of a greater number of members that should be factored in.
- J Chaffey noted that there was a great success in the MDA with the National Conferences drawing Politicians such as Minister Plibersek, Minister Close etc...

M Lamb noted that it may be beneficial to revisit this at the Extraordinary meeting addressing Motions and 2024 National Conference. Proposed that the Board meet for its extraordinary meeting in the first week of September.

D Thurley suggested that the report could be re-reviewed looking at the rate of 70% and the financial impact of specific councils joining the MDA.

J Chaffey queried what the history of Non-Riparian and Riparian membership tiers and the reason for withdrawing the option.

D Thurley noted that he might reach out to former CEO E Bradbury for more comment.

A Tilley noted that part of the angst from the SA Regions was that the withdrawal of the Non-Riparian members was that their membership was doubled over night with little to no comment. A Tilley noted that it seemed as though it was done at a whim of the then CEO. Had felt great offence that he was not included in discussions or comments. Noted that a lot of councils had been upset about that decision at the time with councils withdrawing their membership as soon as a week following.

J Chaffey queried whether there was a plan regarding Chair vacancies in Regions 3 and 8.

- M Lamb noted that there was discussion regarding the realignment of Borders. M Lamb queried whether there was value in combining Regions 7 and 8, and 2 and 3.

J Chaffey queried whether there was a time for the Board to sit together before or after the Conference to sit together.

- M Lamb noted that it would be difficult to sit together before the Conference, but opportunity for after the conference in 2023 or early 2024.

**Refer to Attachment 7.6**

## 8. Meeting Close

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 10:30am.

DRAFT