



# MDA Delegates Report

## October 2021

*The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is Australia's peak body representing local government across the Murray-Darling Basin.*

*The following report should be tabled at council and provides delegates and their councils with an overview of MDA activities and engagements.*



### **A note from the Murray Darling Association CEO:**

*Welcome to the new look MDA Delegates Report. There's been a bit of a break since our last report in April, so there is heaps of news and events to catch up on.*

*In a year much like the last, there have been plenty of challenges to navigate and wins to celebrate across the Murray-Darling Basin. Our operations, much like those of almost all businesses, agencies and associations have been variously affected by COVID-19.*

*Against this background it is pleasing to report on so many activities and achievements that highlight the benefits and the consistency of your membership, in the face of ever-changing situations.*

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## 1. National Conference

### 1.1 77th National Conference Connectivity: Connecting Councils and Catchments

The MDA's 2021 National Conference & AGM ended in Wentworth in May with a study tour of the Menindee Lakes coinciding with vital flows not seen for many years.

The [minutes](#) and [recordings](#) of all events and presenters are available on the MDA website.



*BCLP Graduate John Scriven networking at the 77<sup>th</sup> National Conference.*

### 2.1 78th National Conference Economics, Dams, and Infrastructure

The 78<sup>th</sup> National Conference & AGM will be held in **Albury, 19-21 September 2022** at the **Albury Entertainment Centre**.



*National President Cr David Thurley OAM and Wentworth Shire Council Mayor Susan Nicholls, Civic Reception – Historic Wentworth Gaol, May 2021*

In a year where much has been disrupted and affected by COVID-19, it comes as no surprise that the towns, regions, and countries to emerge quickest and strongest are those with innovative, connected local leadership.

This can be said doubly so for local government and the communities of the Murray Darling Basin. Basin councils have, after all, spent years building connections, infrastructure and resilient economies across catchments and communities.

A resilient economy, and infrastructure to support it, is essential to our people. In the same way, a healthy river system must have a balance of flow and harvest. **There is no future on a dry system.**

The MDA's 78<sup>th</sup> National Conference & AGM is your opportunity to be part of the solution – to join the conversation, to inform future policy, and to engage with the innovators, scientists, educators, and leaders of our time.

[Join us in Albury](#), home to the winding Murray River and its waterways; where local, technical, and political leaders will come together to tackle the big issues of the Basin and forge a future for councils, catchments, and communities.



## 2. Basin Communities Leadership Program

The Basin Communities Leadership Program in Victoria and South Australia has been postponed, with COVID throwing another hurdle in the way. After discussions with participants, who expressed an overwhelming preference to take part in the program in-person rather than virtually, the MDA decided to delay the remaining workshops until a time between December 2021 and March 2022.

The program is offering up to **15 fully funded places per program**, each valued at \$4,800 at no cost to the participant beyond their time and travel. The program involves an on-line guided learning component, a two-day face to face workshop, and the option to **attend the MDA National Conference** with free registration to engage with other community leaders from across the Basin.

Limited places are available.

**REGISTER NOW!**

*To find out more about the program and how your council can get involved, contact:*

Tim Phillips *Communications and Engagement Officer*  
Phone: [\(03\) 5480 3805](tel:0354803805) Email: [t.phillips@mda.asn.au](mailto:t.phillips@mda.asn.au)



*Collarenebri BCLP: (left to right) CEO Emma Bradbury, Bridgette Fitzgerald, Luke & Dylan Farr, Cr John Campbell, Christine Ford, and the amazing Julia Spicer. (Not pictured) Thomas Connor, Shelly Filips, Keith Whiteman, Ang Pasang Rai, Julie Privett, Denielle Smith, and Mark Shephard*

## 3. Submissions & Inquiries

Following a submission in August, the MDA provided evidence to the Select Committee inquiry into Floodplain Harvesting.

The MDA put forth recommendations on floodwater management, the implementation of effective models of consultation & engagement, and the issuing of temporary access licences with specific conditions that must be met before permanent licences can be issued.

The MDA submission to the Select Committee on Floodplain Harvesting NSW Legislative Council August 2021 is available for viewing on the [NSW parliament website](#).





#### 4. Key Meetings & Events

The below table summarises the association's key engagements with the Basin communities.

Date	Event/Meeting	Location
29/03/21-09/04/21	Delivery of the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program	Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, St George, Collarenebri
06/04/21	Presentation to Namoi Unlimited Board Meeting	Held Virtually
15/04/21	MDBA Peak Groups Meeting	Held Virtually
28/06/21	Productivity Commission Meeting	Held Virtually
06/07/21	Meeting with Jim Bentley – CEO Water Division DPIE	Held Virtually
07/07/21	Dharnya Day – NAIDOC Celebrations	Barmah
08/07/21	Murray-Darling Basin July Peak Groups Meeting	Held Virtually
20/07/21	Griffith City Council – Council workshop address	Held Virtually
21/07/21	One Basin CRC All Partner Meeting	Held Virtually
26/07/21	Carina Wyborne ANU – Climate Change and the Murray-Darling Basin	Held Virtually
30/07/21	Rose Jackson MLA – NSW Opposition Water	Held Virtually
03/08/21	Paul Weller – Victorian Water Committee – Dairy	Echuca
04/08/21	Matt Pinnegar – ALGA CEO	Held Virtually
25/08/21	Local Government [SEC=OFFICIAL]	Held Virtually
31/08/21	MRLGA Water Position Paper- Consultant Presentations	Held Virtually
08/09/21	MRLGA Water Position Working Group – Consultation	Held Virtually
15/09/21	Reconnecting River Country Program – Peak Body Focus Group	Held Virtually
16/09/21	Basin Officials Committee – MDA Presentation	Held Virtually
21/09/21	GM Terry Dodds – Murray River Council	Held Virtually
21/09/21	Hon Damian Drum MP	Echuca
24/09/21	Select Committee Inquiry into Floodplain Harvesting – presentation	Held Virtually
28/09/21	Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Program Grants Information Session 2	Held Virtually

#### 5. Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium

The Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium 2021 will be held in **Murray bridge, South Australia** on **13-14 October** at the **Bridgeport Hotel**. The Symposium consists of two key events:



**Day one** of the Symposium participants will hear from local expertise across four panel sessions (environmental, delivery partners, agriculture, and local government), with discussion and Q & A facilitated by a prominent expertise-based Chair.

**Day two** will see participants attend a field trip circumnavigating the Lower Lakes and cross the Barrages.

To take part in the Region 6 Annual stakeholder Symposium [FIND OUT MORE](#) and [REGISTER](#).



## 6. Working towards Vision 2025

Vision 2025 is the Murray Darling Association's five-year Strategic Plan. It sets out the association's goals and describes the strategies we will implement to achieve them.

Vision 2025 is built upon the foundations established by the 2016-19 Strategic Plan, and confirms our place as the Basin's primary driver in local leadership and policy development.

To view the current Strategic Plan, visit the [MDA website](#), or contact the office on [\(03\) 5480 3805](tel:0354803805)

Goal	How	Reference
Local Leadership/Leadership and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Basin Communities Leadership Program</li></ul>	Delivered in 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cunnamulla,</li><li>Dirranbandi,</li><li>St George,</li><li>Collarenebri</li></ul>
Science & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Progress towards establishing the Virtual Centre of Excellence.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Providing a virtual space for local government and stakeholders across the Basin to collaborate and innovate.</li></ul></li></ul>	SAC_Minutes_0012 <b>4.4.2</b> , The Strategic Advisory Committee met virtually on 22/09/21.
Inform better government policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reconnecting River Country Peak Body Focus Group</li></ul>	Held Virtually, hosted by the NSW Government DPIE
Exchange information & facilitate informed debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>77<sup>th</sup> National Conference &amp; AGM, Wentworth 2021 (<i>Networking and open debates with region representatives &amp; the Basin communities</i>).</li><li>The MDA is continuing to cultivate its strategic relationships with the Basin LGAs, allowing for a more informed and interconnected decision and policy making process (<i>Upcoming Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium 2021,13-14 October</i>)</li></ul>	77 <sup>th</sup> National Conference & AGM <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">MDA AGM Meeting Minutes – 19 May 2021</a></li></ul> Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Region 6 Annual Stakeholder Symposium</a></li></ul>
Engagement in policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Meeting with Jim Bentley – CEO Water Division DPIE</li></ul>	Held Virtually

## 7. Region Meetings

Our 12 regions meet quarterly. Each meeting is an incredible opportunity to collaborate with councils in your region and hear from fantastic guest speakers. To find out when your next region meeting is, please contact your chair or our office on (03) 5480 3805.

To find out more about what is happening in other MDA regions, please head over to [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au) where all region meeting minutes are available.

## 8. Committee of Regional Chairs

The Murray Darling Association held its inaugural *Committee of Regional Chairs* meeting on Monday 27 September 2021. The committee meets bi-monthly for the purpose of knowledge sharing, regional development, and inter-regional collaboration.

The MDA makes all board meeting [Minutes](#) available on the MDA website.



## 9. Operational Changes

### 9.1 Farewell and Welcome

Over the last few months, we have farewelled two of our excellent staff, Jessica Maher, and James Marshall. We have also gained a new member in Tim Phillips, the new Communications and Engagement Officer.



#### Tim Phillips

Tim joined the Murray Darling Association in August 2021 in the role of Communications and Engagement Officer. With a background in Hospitality, Signwriting, and holding a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Graphic Design), Tim is well poised to support the MDA in its representation and support of the communities within the Murray-Darling Basin.

*"This is an exciting role that brings together my personal interest and a terrific opportunity to apply and extend my professional experience."*

### 10.1 Make a difference as the new CEO

Cr David Thurley OAM, National President of the Murray Darling Association for local government confirmed on 1 September 2021 that the Murray Darling Association is searching for a new chief executive to lead the organisation into the future.

This is an incredible opportunity for someone who is passionate about delivering high quality outcomes for councils and communities, working with leaders and Governments across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Make a **difference** and [APPLY NOW!](#)  
Would you like to know [MORE?](#) [MEDIA RELEASE](#)



RECRUITING  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Make  
your next move count...

Make  
a difference...

Make  
it with the Murray Darling Association!

APPLY NOW

APPLICATIONS CLOSE SUNDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2021

**For further information please contact the Murray Darling Association:**

Tim Phillips *Communications and Engagement Officer* Phone: [\(03\) 5480 3805](tel:0354803805) Email: [t.phillips@mda.asn.au](mailto:t.phillips@mda.asn.au)

