



Murray Darling Association Inc.

admin@mda.asn.au
www.mda.asn.au
T (03) 5480 3805
ABN: 64 636 490 493

L1/250 Anstruther
Street
P.O. Box 1268
Echuca, Vic 3564

Ordinary Meeting of the Board 19/06/2019

<https://zoom.us/j/482424604>

MINUTES - MEETING No. 387

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Cr Dennis Patterson	Shepparton Council	Region 2
Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Peter Hunter	Renmark Paringa Council	Region 5
Glenn Rappensbeg	Alexandrina Council	R6 Guest
Cr Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Via Zoom
Mayor Heather Holmes-Ross	City of Mitcham	R7 Guest
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr Tony Reneker	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Mayor Phyllis Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Cr Jenny Webb	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Steve Loane	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Shire Council	Via Phone
Cr Richard Marsh	Balonne Shire Council	Via Zoom
Pete George	M&S Group	Via Zoom
Cr Peter Mansfield	Moirra Shire Council	Region 2
Mayor Denis Clark	Northern Areas Council	R8 Via Phone
Cr John Rooney	Snowy Moaro Council	R1 – Guest
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO

1.2 Apologies

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6

1.3 Declarations

Nil

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Meeting 386 held 20th May 2019

Motion: That the minutes of meeting 386 be adopted as an accurate account of the meeting.
P Maytom / P Miller Carried

3. REPORTS

3.1 Chairman's report – Acting Chairman Cr Peter Hunter

3.2 Finance reports – attached

Motion: That the Finance report be noted and accepted by the board.

P George / J MacAllister

Carried

3.3 Chief Executive Officer's report

Motion: That the Chief Executive Officer's report be noted and accepted by the board.

P Miller/ M MacAllister

Carried

3.4 Region reports

Motion: That the reports be noted and accepted by the board.

4. BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Flying Minute 386 -

A/ Chair P Hunter raised the flying minute, and MDA's ownership of permanent water entitlements for investment purposes. The MDA resolved the following motion by flying minute.

Motion:

That the Murray Darling Association

- a) sell all water entitlements currently held by the MDA and hold the proceeds in a fixed term deposit pending determination of any alternative investment strategy, and
- b) support the development of water market trading rules that limit or avoid adverse third-part impacts of investment in tradable water products by non-water using investors

Motion: that the board ratify the flying minutes

J MacAllister/P George

Carried

4.2 MOU with Landcare NSW

A draft MOU has been shared with LandCare NSW. LandCare NSW CEO Adrian Zammit will discuss this MOU with the Executive Committee during their next board meeting on 25 June.

J MacAllister notes that NSW Landcare Conference conflicts with MDA Annual Conference.

4.3 Follow up Correspondence

4.3.1 National Farmers Federation

Item 386 – 5.4

E Bradbury discussed briefly that the National Farmers Federation have recently articulated an aspiration and plan to increase Australia's agricultural productivity. The Board has expressed a view that it will be important for local government to have a relationship with our peak bodies across the farming and agriculture sector to ensure implementation of that plan is responsibly undertaken. E Bradbury met with the CEO of NFF following the board meeting

4.3.2 NSW Department of Industry

On Jan 8th 2019 Mayors and representatives of Wentworth, Brewarrina, Bourke, Central Darling Shires and Broken Hill City Council sought to meet with the NSW Minister for Regional Water Hon. Niall Blair and representatives from his department; the NSW OEH, the MDBA, and the CEWO; and the Northern Basin Commissioner to explore short-term and long-term strategies to improve the health of the Barwon-Darling River system in the

wake of seriously adverse social, economic and environmental impacts created by the current and prolonged lack of any substantive flows. That meeting occurred in Martin Place in Sydney on 23rd January.

This was an excellent meeting and a great opportunity to build on the goodwill and engagement generated and highlighted what outcomes it generated – however the absence of follow-up or outcomes is lamentable.

Departmental staff undertook to circulate minutes and responses after the event. To date there has been nothing back from the Minister's office, and the attending councils are chasing the MDA to follow up for a response.

The executive is continuing to pursue next steps and will raise the matter in meeting with Director Rachel Connell on Thursday 20th June.

4.3.3 **NSW Government and Department of Industry**

E Bradbury discussed recent correspondence with the NSW Government. In February the MDA wrote to the NSW Premier seeking information on current plans to develop land in south-west NSW for the purpose of economic activation. The MDA received advice that the correspondence was referred to the NSW Department of Industry for response.

E Bradbury updated the board on a letter received from NSW Department of Industry on the 18th of June regarding the questions raised about the economic activation plan, and the extent of the footprint. E Bradbury has concerns that the board's questions have not been answered in enough details. Discussion to continue at the next board meeting, following CEO's meeting with Rachel Connell on Thursday 20th of June.

Motion: that the MDA continues to engage with the NSW Government to seek timely and meaningful responses to these and other important issues as they arise.

P Miller/J MacAllister

Carried

4.4 **MDA membership policy and application approval process**

Following review and consultation of initial drafts, the board was presented with the following membership application resources:

- MDA Membership Policy
- Membership Procedure
- Members Code of Conduct
- Membership Application Form

E Bradbury clarified that the membership policy and applicational approval process addressed a gap in MDA resources.

J MacAllister raised a point about the policy and will email the MDA executive team.

P Miller raised a question about how organisations can become members, which was resolved by E Bradbury.

- Motion: That the Murray Darling Association
- a) Adopt the MDA Membership Policy
 - b) Adopt the MDA Members Code of Conduct
 - c) Note the membership procedure and application forms
 - d) Table the policy and supporting documents at the next meeting of their region

J MacAllister/P Maytom

Carried

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1 Disciplinary Matter

A member council recently considered a matter regarding the conduct of one of its delegates to the MDA. The delegate is alleged to have assaulted a fellow councilor, an incident requiring medical attention. The delegate is a regional committee member of the MDA. The occurrence of the incident is not in dispute, the delegate having confirmed in discussion with the executive that the event took place.

In nominating for and accepting a position on an MDA committee, committee members commit to uphold the MDA Code of Conduct which in part requires members to

- treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness, and have proper
- regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare;
- not harass, bully or discriminate against colleagues, members of the public and/or employees;
- contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive environment/culture through professional workplace relationships;

The rules of the MDA provide for the board to consider the expulsion or suspension of a member or their agent from membership of the MDA if the person has acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests or reputation of the MDA or unbecoming of a Member, or has neglected to comply with the code of conduct..

Motion: That the board notes the matters and considers the membership of the delegate under s 28B of the Constitution following the conclusion of police and the member council's own investigation into the incident.

J MacAllister/P Maytom

Carried

5.2 MDA to cover the cost of registration at National Conference for regional chairs

It is recognized that regional chairs of the MDA contribute an extremely valuable amount of time, energy and expertise in the performance of their roles as regional chairs/board members with no payment beyond that provided by way of the modest Councilor remuneration afforded to every councilor.

It is also true that the MDA is not able to pay the expenses of region chairs, and that this cost falls back to the commitment made to councils.

Registration at the National Conference represents value to council, without direct impact on the cashflow of the MDA. However, for the MDA to cover the cost of registration at National Conference for regional chairs, the impact to budget revenues, and therefore indirect impact on cashflow is calculated at approximately \$9,100.00 per annum.

Costs covered will include registration to all conference event but does not yet extend to travel and accommodation.

Motion: That the board

- a) Note appreciation that to date, charring councils have paid for their delegate/chair to attend the MDA Annual Conference
- b) Provide free registration to the MDA National Conference to all Regional Chairs or their duly appointed proxy commencing 2020.
- c) Request preparation of a report on impact to budget to cover travel and accommodation costs for future consideration.

P Miller / J MacAllister

Carried

5.3 Connecting Catchments and Communities – Moira to Mildura

The MDA Connecting Catchments and Communities forums are a series of inter-regional events aimed at enhancing water literacy and exchanging information between councils and communities across the Basin at the leadership level.

The **Connecting Catchments and Communities – Moira to Mildura** event is targeted to councils and communities along the Murry River regions upstream and downstream of the primary system constraints. This event will explore issues of constraints, management of the Barmah choke, impact of expanding the irrigation footprint to permanent plantings below The Choke, total capacity and supply obligations etc. These events provide an opportunity for knowledge building and information exchange with government departments and agencies, and with each other.

This event is being coordinated by the executive and the Region 2 committee and is penciled in for mid-July at a location to be confirmed.

Noted by the Board, and E Bradbury will keep the board posted.

5.4 Connecting Catchments and Communities – Lower Lakes

Connecting Catchments and Communities - Lower Lakes & Coorong Working Groups

Regional Collaboration is scheduled for Friday 26th July 2019 at the Fleurieu Function Centre. This event is being coordinated by the executive and the Region 6 committee. Further details will be distributed as confirmed.

Noted by the board.

5.5 LGNSW Water Management Conference

The MDA has been invited to present at the LGNSW Conference in Albury on Wednesday 4th September on the topic of Water security and quality in the context of changing water availability due to drought, legislative changes and the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The Insight/Q&A style panel session will consider the role of local government in the relationship between healthy, connected rivers; regional economic development; population growth; farming; and land care practices. [See project proposal attached]

The panellists will include:

- Cr David Thurley, National President of the MDA and councillor Albury City Council
- Pete Arkle, CEO NSW Farmers Association
- Adrian Zammit, CEO Landcare NSW
- Prof Max Findlayson - Director of the Institute of Land, Water and Society, CSU
- Matt Barwick - Research Portfolio Manager, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Facilitator: Emma Bradbury – CEO Murray Darling Association

J MacAllister suggests that it is important for region Chairs to actively promote and encourage participation at the events. As a result, the motion was changed to:

Motion: That the board

- a) Note upcoming MDA events
- b) Promote attendance at the LGNSW Water Management Conference and other events through their regional networks

6. STRATEGY

6.1 Strategic Advisory Committee

The MDA strategic advisory group was established in 2018 under the attached Terms of Reference. South Australia's representative to the group Peter Bond will retire from his position with the MRLGA on 30 June, and from his position on the group by extension, leaving the SA Representative position vacant.

Brenton Lewis has been identified as a candidate to replace the South Australian appointment.

Brenton Lewis's suitability criteria for the role include:

- Mayor the Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Successfully building and operating own businesses
- Many years in corporate agriculture at senior management levels, at a national level for corporate business and at the local level within the state of South Australia.
- Chief Executive of Regional Development Murraylands and Riverland Inc. for 10 years (non-current)
- Currently owns and operates a Primary Production property that includes irrigation.
- Licensed irrigator on the Murray River for 42 years.
- Qualified company director and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
- Good governance and management skills.
- Strong belief in collaboration to deliver robust platforms for success.
- Understands that the MDA is an amalgam of individual regions each with similarities but contrasting, importance of embracing the whole basin community.
- Longstanding relationship with the MDA characterised by honest exchange of frank and practical advice.

E Bradbury spoke to the recommendation and outlined B Lewis' strong engagement with MDA, and extensive background in regional development. E Bradbury spoke about B Lewis' role as a great sounding board, stating that he will make a valuable addition to the strategic advisory group.

Motion: That the board:

- a) Appoint Brenton Lewis to the Strategic Advisory Group
- b) Approve the release of this item from confidential

P Miller/ J MacAllister

Carried

6.2 Projects/Grants

The MDA has a tremendous history in the deliver of nationally significant funded projects including:

- Save the Murray
- Waterwise Training Program
- Murray Valley Trail
- Sustainable Recreation Program
- 1956 Flood DVD
- Creative Catchment Kids Program – Local Land Heroes
- Creative Catchment Kids Program – Our Catchment Champions
- 2015 Social and Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan – Local Government Data Availability Project
- And many more....

2019/2020 has seen the commencement of the Connecting Catchments and Communities program (unfunded), and the development of the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program (funded).

E Bradbury invites and encourages all regions to reflect on what type of projects they would like to see which align with our purpose.

Action: Region chairs to provide feedback of suggested initiatives for funded projects.

P Maytom raised a topic for further discussion regarding a letter to the planning department regarding a solar farm. P Maytom suggests that the MDA should take note of this development and what they are doing in that area.

S Loane also raised a future discussion topic on drought, Town Water, and licensing for emergency water, in relation to NSW problem on groundwater. Forbes Shire Council will send through information to E Bradbury who will distribute it to the board.

CLOSE - Meeting closed 2:15pm