



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Ordinary Meeting of the Board 10.00am AEST – (9.30am SA) Skype

MINUTES - MEETING No. 357

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Cr Leigh Byron	Balranald Council
Cr Kevin Myers	Mid-Murray Council	Cr Barry Featherston	Alexandrina Council
Cr Peter Jamieson	Port Adelaide Enfield	Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Council
Emma Bradbury	Chief Executive Officer		

This meeting was conducted via telephone conference call. National President D Thurley appointed Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury to chair the meeting.

Cr Leigh Byron, Mayor of Balranald Shire attended at the invitation of the Chief Executive Officer and National President in accordance with Resolution 5.2 of Meeting 355, in the capacity of Acting Chair of Region 3. The appointment is to be confirmed by resolution of the board on receipt of the necessary resolution from Balranald Council.

Warm welcome and thanks extended to Leigh.

1.2 Apologies

Des Bilske	Edwards River Council	Murray Woods	Greater Western District
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Motion: That the apologies be accepted
K Myers/P Jamieson

Carried

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion: That the minutes of the meeting held Thursday 24th March 2016 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

P Jamieson/B Featherston

Carried

3. BUSINESS ARISING

3.1 Review Action Items table

Motions requiring action from Board Meetings	Meeting	Notes
Write to RAMROC seeking clarification regarding Water for Food project.	356 Mar 16	Done. Response received. Matter closed out.
Write to Adrian Wells, thanking him for his years of dedicated service to the MDA.	356 Mar 16	Done. Reply received. Requests to be tabled at next meeting.

Surrender the lease on the Albury office.	356 Mar 16	Done. Warm note of thanks to the ACC, and their wonderful staff for such tremendous support of the MDA.
Distribute Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for comment.	356 Mar 16	Done. Comments at later item 4.1
Respond to correspondence regarding refund of monies to MDF donors.	355 Mar 16	Done. Further requests received.
Meet with the Dept of Ag and Water Resources.	354 Feb 16	Done.
Signed copy of the Code of Conduct and Duty Statement for all board members.	353	Not yet complete. Emma to send reminders
Reinstate Peter Smith's membership.	353	Done.
Delete the Discovering the Darling website and Save the Murray site and transfer useful information and documents to www.mda.asn.au under the 'Projects' tab.	353	Done.
CEO contract	351	Done.
Voting framework.	351	Done.
That the board develop and adopt a policy and supporting process for board member expenses and re-imburement.	350	See constitution.
Planning for the Dubbo Conference.	350	Continuing
Towns/communities of Region 5 to fwd submissions to the MDA executive to host the Conference.	350	Emma to write to R5 Councils
That all region chairs set the dates for their region meetings for the coming year for inclusion on the website.	348	Chairs to follow up.
Ken Rogers awarded a MDA Life Membership.	348	Done.
Delegation of authority to the Finance Manager to authorize transactions.	346	Not yet complete.
Adrian Wells PhD funding request - acknowledge, but decline.	346	Decline
MDF Committee constitute at least one other MDA Board Member.	346	MDF currently unconstitutional. See Part 3 section 13 draft constitution for renewal.
Work with the MDF to establish an appropriate financial statement to meet their reporting requirements.	346	Done.
Distribute draft Communication and Media Protocol for consideration by the board.	344	Not done.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Region Reports

R1	Next meeting of R1 to be held in Greater Hume. Corowa and Urana shires have merged to become Federation Council. Tumut and Tumbarumba have merged to become
R2	(EB) Des exceedingly busy managing the merger. R2 meeting held in Berigan Fri April 8. Meeting was well attended, with MDBA Manager of River Ops, David Dreverman providing the guest presentation. Meeting was also attended by past president G Toll. It was reported RAMROC Chair and longtime member Terry Hogan was later scathing of the MDA at a RAMROC meeting. Reason unclear. Chief Executive Officer to follow up. The meeting had discussed a proposed merger between Regions 2&3. This proposal was defeated.

R3	Cr Leigh Byron, Mayor of Balranald noted that following the presentation in Euston, Balranald is keen to work with the MDA. Council will consider the matter and provide the appropriate resolution consistent with the current and future rules and objectives of the organisation. Much work to be done in region 3.
R4	It was noted that since accepting the role of Interim Chair of R4 in Aug 2015, Mildura RCC have not been in a position to regularly attend or participate in MDA board meetings, nor regional development or engagement on MDA matters. The board noted that the issues pertaining to water management and the Basin are significant in region 4, and that strong and engaged leadership and representation is required in that region. It was identified that discussions about potential mergers or realignments may be held in the future.
R5	Next meeting on June 6 in Waikeri. Kevin requested Chief Executive Officer write to R5 councils inviting expressions of interest to host 2017 National Conference and MDA Annual General Meeting.
R6	R6 have adopted a new meeting format – with a Workshop held separate to a region exec meeting – allowing for a distinction between general discussion and decision making. This is working well. State water allocations in SA currently at 37%. Barry noted that irrigators in SA are feeling the pain and ‘talking directly from their pockets.’ Barry met informally with the MDBA Chair Neil Andrew and SA board member Di Davidson. Noted that the work by the MDA board and exec in re-establishing process and credibility is gaining traction, but the MDA now needs to be getting back out on the front foot/front page.
R7	Next meeting June 7. Peter noted strong support in R7 for the MDF. Noted also that previous GM Ray Najar now an active and engaged member of the region, and will be bringing a report to the region on an undisclosed topic. Membership numbers in R7 remain strong.
R8	(EB) Noted that no replacement for retired chair Rod Button had emerged. Chief Executive Officer has had discussions and will meet with Hon Geoff Brock, SA Minister for Local Govt, and long time MDA supporter when next in SA to discuss leadership opportunities for Region 8.
R9	Paul noted he had attended a very informative EWAG meeting. Noted also the impact that council mergers are having across the regions of NSW. For further discussion in general business.
R10	(EB) Murray Wood also unavailable, impacted by mergers. Emma noted that the planning for the Dubbo conference now critical and proposed the establishment of a committee, and a possible revised format for the event.
R11	
R12	

Motion:

That the MDA

- a) Accept the region reports
- b) Write and thank Cr Milne and the MRCC for their support of the MDA, with particular reference to the contribution by Chief Executive Officer Gerard Jose to the MDA’s strategic planning workshop
- c) declare the Chair of Region 4 vacant, consistent with Item 7.5.2 of the constitution, and
- d) authorize the Chief Executive Officer to work with member councils in that region, including MRCC to attract and engage a leadership group, consistent with Resolution 5.2 of Meeting 355.

B Featherston/K Myers

Carried

4.2 Chief Executive Officer’s report

- Projects
 - WRI Project – at item 4.4
 - Election 2016 – Candidate forums
- Membership and Marketing
 - Web Updates enhancing communication capacity
 - Membership card printer and software purchased
 - Griffith presentation
 - Greater Hume Shire presentation
 - Euston – Balranald/Wentworth presentation
- Albury Office – surrender of lease

- Constitution draft – Draft distributed to board members 19/05/2016. Great work with and by RK Lawyers, and encouraged board members to review the draft in detail.

4.3 Finance Reports

Finance Manager and MYOB Reports as presented.

Review of membership funding cap to account for NSW mergers. Further discussion required with Committee to be established and provide recommendation to the board.

Draft Budget 2016/17 – to be distributed for consideration.

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to establish an appropriate salary range for the position of the Chief Executive Officer.

It was noted that while there is a favorable outlook to the end of the 2016 year, and a balanced budget for 16/17, further work will need to be done to attract grants and continue to increase memberships to adequately resource the MDA to enable the organisation to effectively meet our objectives.

Motion: That the reports be accepted.

D Thurley/P Jamieson

Carried

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1 Strategic Plan 2016-19

Feedback has been received from a range of sources.

Motion: That the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2016-19 be carried forward to the July meeting to allow further time to consider stakeholder feedback, and to ensure synergy and consistency with the draft Constitution.

K Myers/D Thurley

Carried

5.2 Election 2016 Project

Barry noted that R6 working with Alexandrina council to stage an event in Mayo. Mt Barker less likely, viz R6 councils.

Emma noted that the opportunity to attend these events would serve an additional marketing function for the exec.

Chairs to liaise with Emma to organize dates and locations in interested regions.

5.3 Membership eligibility criteria

The need to establish rules for eligibility is becoming increasingly evident. Rules enable decisions to be made consistently and fairly, and avoid disputes when questions arise.

Motion: That membership eligibility rules to be included in the constitution and on the website, include

- a) individuals are entitled to hold membership in the region of their normal place of residence.
- b) Members may only vote in the region of their membership
- c) Any member may attend meetings in regions other than their home meeting as a guest. Guests are not entitled to vote and should observe the protocols of the host region.
- d) A local government member representative is not eligible for associate membership.

B Featherstone/K Myers

Carried

Kevin Myers left the meeting at 11.26am

5.4 MDBP Impacts Assessment Framework project

MDA and the Western Research Institute have developed a draft ToR for a project to develop a rigorous and repeatable basin plan evaluation framework and methodology against which the social and economic impacts of the plan can be measured and assessed. The assessment tool must be able to identify and distinguish short term, unrelated, and one-off impacts from the underlying performance of the Plan.

The budget for the project is likely to be in the order of \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00. For the project to proceed, funding for the project must be consistent with the funding and acquittal principals adopted by the MDA in 2014.

Motion: The Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to continue to develop the project in line with our Strategic Plan.

P Jamieson/L Byron

Carried

5.5 MDA Constitution – Compliance review

Consistent with the review of the MDA's operations and compliance, the MDA resolved last year to review the constitution. The aim is not to change substantially the objectives/purposes of the organisation, however there are various uncertainties, interpretational issues and, in some cases, errors in the existing constitution.

Importantly, the constitution re-write should not drive discussions. Rather, the re-write is intended to update the document to have it reflect the current objectives of the organisation and assist the MDA to operate with a clear and compliant governance structure.

The updated constitution will be put before the membership at the 2016 Annual General Meeting AGM in Dubbo, following a period of consultation and feedback.

First draft of the revised constitution of the MDA was distributed to board members 19/05/2016.

Motion: The board notes the draft and authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to distribute the draft online and directly to the membership in line with the consultation process.

D Thurley/P Jamieson

Carried

5.6 NSW Council Amalgamations

Council amalgamations have been announced across NSW, which has created a significant burden of work and a level of uncertainty for many MDA member councils.

Several regions, including Region 10, Region 9, Region 2 have noted their concern at the difficulty of maintaining compliance under the constitution, providing fair and democratic elections, and continuing to meet the workload and support impacted councils in this environment.

Particularly, challenges now exist in relation to timing, voting rights and entitlements, attendance capacity, and the absence of councillors in a number of councils seeking to nominate for a regional executive roles in the regions.

The board discussed how the MDA can mitigate the burden on impacted regions across NSW.

Motion: The Board of the MDA resolves that

- a) NSW Region AGMs will be deferred to a date to be set by the Region no sooner than August 2016 to allow time for merged councils to appoint and replace voting delegates to the MDA.
- b) Regions in NSW will continue to operate under their current arrangements (including filling any casual vacancies, if required, on an interim basis),
- c) The review of the constitution will consider and include provisions that allow sufficient flexibility to allow for the impact of council amalgamations into the future.

P Maytom/D Thurley

Carried

5.7 Meeting Times and technology

Peter Jamieson suggested that variations to meeting times and technologies be trialed to try to get better outcomes in communications for the monthly board meetings. It was noted that today's meeting, which was held by mobile teleconference (group chat) as a result of a last minute internet outage was surprisingly effective.

Chief Executive Officer to send an email to board members to facilitate feedback and suggestions.

6. MEETING CLOSE 11.47am

Action Items

Action Items	Meeting	Notes
Write to invite R5 councils to submit expressions of interest to host 2017 National Conference	357	
Establish committee to resolve Dubbo Conference format	357	
Notify the Mayor and CEO of MRCC of Resolution 4.1	357	
Distribute 2016/17 Draft Budget to the Board	357	
Notify WRI of board approval to peruse Evaluation Framework project	357	
Distribute draft of the revised constitution to members and stakeholders for comment	357	
Prepare media and update webpage as above	357	
Notify NSW region chairs and member councils of motion 5.6	357	
Email board re meeting times and technology.	357	
Reminder to board members to provide signed Code of Conduct	357	