



Murray Darling Association Inc.

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Albury, NSW 2640

Ordinary Meeting of the Board 10.30am Monday 5 March 2018 GoToMeeting

MINUTES - MEETING No. 373

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Leigh Byron	Balranald Shire Council	Region 3
Cr Darriea Turley	Broken Hill City Council	Region 4
Cr Peter Hunter	Renmark Paringa Council	Region 5
Cr Barry Featherston	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr David Shetliffe	Town of Walkerville	Region 7
Cr Denis Clark	Northern Areas Council	Region 8
Cr John Campbell	Gunnedah Shire Council	Region 11
Cr Richard Marsh	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Peter George	M&S Group Accounting	Treasurer
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO
Angus Verley*	MDA	Senior Officer

*Non-board member – attendance by invitation.

1.2 Apologies

Cr Peter Mansfield	Moira Shire Council	Region 2
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9

Motion: That the apologies be accepted.

D Turley/P Hunter Carried

1.3 Declarations

No declarations

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Meeting 372 held 3pm Wednesday 31 January 2018

Motion: That the Minutes of Board Meeting 372 held Wednesday January 31 2018 be accepted.

B Featherston/D Clark Carried

3. ELECTIONS

3.1 Election of the National President

Cr Thurley declared all positions vacant, and vacated the chair. The CEO assumed the chair and called for nominations for National President. Cr Thurley (Albury City Council) was the only nominee.

Motion: That the Board duly elect Cr David Thurley as National President.

D Thurley/L Byron

Carried

3.2 Election of the National Vice President

Cr Thurley resumed the chair and declared vacant the position of National Vice President. Nominations were called. Cr Featherston (Alexandrina Council) was the only nominee.

Motion: That the Board duly elect Cr Featherston as National Vice President.

B Featherston/D Clark

Carried

3.3 Appointment of the Treasurer

As per Part 4, section 8(3) of the MDA Constitution, the Board must appoint a Treasurer of the Board. The Treasurer:

- (a) must have, in the reasonable opinion of the Board, appropriate qualifications in accounting or a like field or otherwise have sound financial expertise;
- (b) may be a Board member, an Individual Member or an Organisation Representative;
- (c) if the Treasurer is not a Board member, the Treasurer will attend Board Meetings upon request of the Board.

Motion: That the Board reappoint Peter George to the position of Treasurer.

D Thurley/D Turley

Carried

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he and the CEO meet with Member for Farrer Sussan Ley on February 19 to discuss their respective perspectives on the implementation of the Basin Plan, following a media report that they were at odds. During the meeting there was agreement that a fair and equitable working Basin Plan that all parties are committed to was the 'first, best option'.

4.2 Finance Reports

Peter George spoke to the Finance Reports. Cr Shetliffe queried the policy for writing off bad debts, and whether an action of the Board is required. The CEO reported that the matter would be considered as part of a review of the MDA Policy on Delegation of Authority, which is under way.

4.3 Chief Executive Officer's Report

The CEO spoke to elements of the attached report. Cr Shetliffe requested a copy of the summaries of regional submissions provided to the board of the Natural Resources Access Regulator. The summary will be circulated.

The CEO also gave an update on the MDA head office. The CEO is currently looking for an alternative site in Echuca/Moama, following the imminent lease of the current office to a new tenant.

4.4 Region reports

Region 1

Cr Thurley reported that low flows in the Murray River detrimentally impacted tourism operators across the Australia Day long weekend. Region 1 will put another submission to MDBA River Operations requesting that sufficient flows for tourism purposes be maintained for the Australia Day long weekend. The CEO reported that the matter was raised in a recent meeting with MDBA River Operations.

Region 5

Cr Peter Hunter tabled a written report (attached).

Region 6

Cr Featherston reported on the appointment of Shen Mann to the position of Region 6 Executive Office. He said Ms Mann was selected from a large field of high-calibre candidates.

Region 7

Cr Shetliffe reported on the February 22 meeting of Region 7. At the meeting it was resolved that the R7 AGM wouldn't be held until after the South Australian local government elections in November this year.

Region 8

Cr Clark reported on his investigation into the provision of Murray River water to communities in Region 8. He has contacted SA Water to request data on flows through the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline since the Millennium Drought.

Region 11

Cr Campbell tabled a written report (attached).

4.5 Communications and engagement report

There has been a concerted effort to build the MDA's social media presence following the Strategic Planning Workshop, where the message was clear that more needs to be done to sell what the MDA does.

The following month presented numerous opportunities to engage on social media, with the ongoing debate and subsequent vote on the Northern Basin Amendment disallowance motion. Since the workshop six media releases have been distributed, one summarising the workshop itself, one commenting on the Murray-Darling Declaration, and four related to the disallowance motion. All these releases have been linked through Facebook and Twitter, generating numbers of likes, shares and comments.

Our e-newsletter was also promoted through Facebook and Twitter and similarly increased our following. A paid promotion was used to boost the Facebook post, resulting in the post reaching 3751 people by March 1, as compared to the typical reach of under 200.

In the past month the MDA has 58 new 'likes' on Facebook, with 360 overall.

The MDA now has 615 followers on Twitter and are regularly being linked into tweets by a range of government and non-government agencies, of agricultural, environmental and economic persuasions.

Motion: That the reports be accepted.

D Shetliffe/D Turley

Carried

5. BUSINESS ARISING

5.1 **Actions trackers**

A process has commenced to develop a motions/actions tracker to track progress on actions arising from the National Conference, Strategic Planning Workshop and Board meetings. This tracker will be presented to the Board once completed.

Motion: That the board notes the preparation of a motions/actions tracker.

D Turley/D Clark

Carried

6. **GENERAL BUSINESS**

6.1 **South Australian Royal Commission**

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission was launched on 23 January 2018 to investigate the operations and effectiveness of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, including whether the Plan is being complied with.

The Royal Commission is now calling for written submissions from people or organisations who have relevant experiences with the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Terms of Reference and further information on how to make a submission are available on the Commission's website at www.mdbrc.sa.gov.au. Submissions are due by 30 April 2018.

All Regions of the MDA are encouraged to prepare regional submissions.

The MDA will also prepare an overarching submission.

Motion: That Board Chairs oversee the preparation of regional submissions to the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission, to be sent to the CEO prior to March 26 for discussion at the next Board meeting.

B Featherston/D Shetliffe

Carried

6.2 **E-newsletter regional profiles**

The inaugural MailChimp e-newsletter was distributed on February 23 and has received an overwhelmingly positive response.

One way to strengthen the newsletter would be to incorporate more regional content. Each region is invited to contribute to the newsletter monthly.

Received and noted

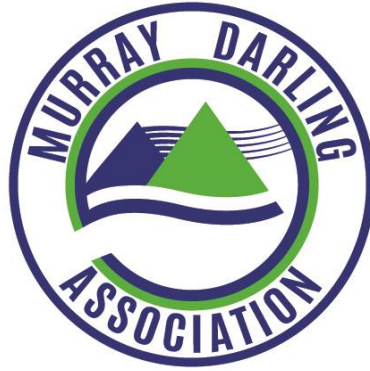
7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

7.1 **Letter from Mick Gentleman (Attached)**

On February 27 the MDA received a letter from Mick Gentleman MLA (ACT). The letter acknowledges the correspondence sent to Mr Gentleman along with all MDB Ministerial Council Ministers after the Min-Co meeting in Albury late last year.

Received and noted

8. CLOSE



Chief Executive Officer's Board Report February 2018

Prepared by: Emma Bradbury

Chief Executive Officer
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1. Diary

DATE	EVENT/MEETING	LOCATION
05/02/18	Brochure design meeting with Pimlico Writers	GoToMeeting
09/02/18	Presentation to the Border Regional Organisation of Councils	St George
13/02/18	Meeting with Murray River Council GM Des Bilske	Echuca
15/02/18	Region 9 Ordinary Meeting	GoToMeeting
16/02/18	Region 6 Ordinary Meeting	GoToMeeting
19/02/18	Meeting with Sussan Ley	Albury
19/02/18	Meeting with Ross McPherson	Shepparton
22/02/18	Region 7 Ordinary Meeting	GoToMeeting
23/02/18	Presentation to the South-West RED	GoToMeeting
26/02/18	Aquatic Subcommittee meeting	Sydney
27/02/18	Natural Resources Access Regulator Meeting	Sydney
27/02/18	Meeting with Darcy Moar	Sydney
28/02/18	Meeting with the MDBA and CEWH	Canberra
28/02/18	Meeting with Joel Fitzgibbon and Tony Burke	Canberra

2. Engagements

2.1. Presentation to the Border Regional Organisation of Councils, St George

The BROOC has eight member councils, including Balonne, Goondiwindi, Gwydir, Inverell, Moree Plains, Southern Downs, Tenterfield and Walgett. Gwydir is the current chairing council.

The presentation was well received. In addition, MDBA CEO Phillip Glyde spoke at the meeting, speaking highly of the MDA.

Gwydir Executive Assistant Robyn Phillips arranged with the MDA for the BROOC to cover the CEO's travel costs, including flights, accommodation, and car hire, amounting to almost \$800.00.

3.2 Meeting with Murray River Council GM Des Bilske

The MDA met with Des Bilske on February 13 to discuss the prospect of Murray River Council taking a more active role in Region 3.

3.3 Community representation on the Basin Plan Amendments

The MDA made direct contact with cross-bench Senators, members of the Labor Country Caucus and their advisors, as follows:

Politicians:

Senator Stirling Griff (NXT)

Rex Patrick (NXT)

Senator Frazer Anning (IND)

Senator Steve Martin (JLN)

Senator Cory Bernardi (AC)

Pauline Hanson (PHON)

Senator Derryn Hinch (DHJP)

Joel Fitzgibbon (Labor Country Caucus)

Lisa Chesters (Labor Country Caucus)

Basin Officials Committee departmental members:

Ben Bruce (SA)

Darcy Moar (NSW)

Helen Vaughan (VIC)

Simon Zanatta (QLD)

Nektarios Tsirbas (Commonwealth)

In the days after the Senate vote, letters were sent to all Ministerial Council ministers outlining the MDA's position and urging Basin governments to work collaboratively on a way forward to implement the Basin Plan.

All Region Chairs are encouraged to engage with their state and federal counterparts on behalf of their regions on issues of this nature.

3.4 Meeting with Member for Farrer Sussan Ley

The CEO and National President met with Member for Farrer Sussan Ley in Albury on February 19 to discuss the electorate's position on the future of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

The two had been reported in the local newspaper, The Border Mail, to be at odds over the Senate vote to disallow the Northern Basin Amendment. While both staunchly supported the Northern Basin Amendment, Ms Ley responded to the Senate vote by urging the New South Wales Government to withdraw from the Plan, while the MDA called on all governments to stay the course and reach agreement on a way forward.

Cr Thurley and Ms Ley found common ground during the meeting, with Ms Ley stating that a working Basin Plan was the "first, best option" for achieving positive and balanced outcomes for communities, the environment and regional economies.

A media release was distributed by the MDA after the meeting to highlight this common ground.

3.5 Meeting with Ross McPherson

The CEO met with Ross McPherson, the Executive Chairman of the McPherson Media Group and a significant influencer within the GMID, in Shepparton on February 19.

3.6 Presentation to the South-West RED, Roma (via GoToMeeting)

The CEO provided an introduction to the MDA for non-member councils, and also summarised current issues affecting the implementation of the Basin Plan.

There was significant interest from councils present in the role of the MDA, and what it does to represent the interests of its member councils.

The South-West RED member councils are Murweh, Quilpie, Bulloo, Paroo, Maranoa and Balonne

3.7 Aquatic subcommittee

The MDA, represented by the CEO, attended the first meeting of the NSW Environmental Trust's Aquatic Subcommittee. Travel expenses were covered by the NSW Government.

The subcommittee oversees the implementation of the River Connections project, which will deliver a grants program to trial new approaches to integrated river management aimed at improving health outcomes for rivers in NSW.

The subcommittee's role includes reviewing business plans, progress reports and final reports and assessing expressions of interest and grant applications for the Trust's consideration.

The subcommittee is expected to meet four times within its first year and annually thereafter. This appointment is for the duration of the project.

The Aquatic Subcommittee is in discussions with the MDA about utilising the MDA network in its upcoming stakeholder engagement program across northern NSW.

3.8 Natural Resources Access Regulator

On February 27 the CEO met with the Board of the New South Wales Natural Resources Access Regulator, including Chair Craig Knowles.

The creation of a Natural Resources Access Regulator was recommended by Ken Matthews in his report into water management and compliance in NSW.

The [Natural Resources Access Regulator Bill](#) was passed into law on 30 November 2017.

It is worth noting that the chair of the NRAR is Craig Knowles who, while in the position of Chair of the Murray Darling Basin Authority in 2014 urged the Board of the MDA to pursue constitutional and operational reforms and said "If the MDA didn't already exist, we'd have to invent it."

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the status of the regulator's establishment, how it functions and what role local government can play.

Prior to the meeting the CEO invited feedback on the NRAR's role from all MDA regions and received responses from Regions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 11. This feedback was summarised (attached) and presented to the NRAR.

The feedback was exceptionally well received, providing an excellent start to the relationship between the NRAR and MDA.

The NRAR is eager to use the network opportunities provided by the MDA.

3.9 Meeting with the Office of the NSW Minister for Regional Water Niall Blair

On February 27 in Sydney the CEO met with Darcy Moar, Senior Policy Adviser to NSW Minister for Regional Water Niall Blair.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the NSW Government's position on the Basin Plan in the wake of the Senate disallowance motion. The CEO urged the government to 'stay the course' on the Plan and not withdraw.

Also discussed was the MDA's 2018 National Conference, with the CEO extending an invitation to Mr Blair to deliver the opening address. Sponsorship, presenters and departmental exhibits from the NSW Government were also covered.

The CEO also discussed resourcing of the MDA.

3.10 Meeting with CEWH Jodie Swirepik, along with CEWO and MDBA River Operations staff.

An introduction to the MDA was provided to new CEWH Jody Swirepik, who was appointed to the role following the retirement of David Papps. Also discussed was the timing of environmental flows to provide maximum tourism benefit.

The meeting continues the MDA's excellent relationship with the CEWO.

Both the MDBA and CEWO are eager to use MDA networks and the e-newsletter for their own communications.

3.11 Meeting with Joel Fitzgibbon and Tony Burke

The CEO met with Joel Fitzgibbon and Tony Burke in Canberra on February 28 to put forward the MDA's position that all Basin governments must stay the course on the Basin Plan.

3 National Conference

6.1 74th National Conference and AGM, August 29-31 2018

Planning continues for the 2018 National Conference, being hosted by Leeton Shire Council in Region 9.

The venue has been confirmed as the Leeton Soldiers Club.

The theme has been confirmed as Equity, Community, Confidence

Stops on the partners and study tours are being finalised.

The focus now is on sponsors and presenters, with a sponsorship prospectus to be distributed imminently and prospective presenters to be contacted by the CEO.

4 Media and marketing

4.1 MailChimp

The MDA's inaugural e-newsletter was distributed on February 23 to 1123 recipients. It was compiled by the CEO and Senior Officer using a free online program called MailChimp.

The inaugural edition will form the template for future editions, although it will be open to change, including the incorporation of more regional content.

The MailChimp program allows detailed reporting on readership numbers. For example, by February 27, the newsletter had been read by 360 people and only 11 had unsubscribed. It had been opened a total of 1434 times and there had been 72 clicks on hyperlinks. The program even allows for the administrator to see how many times individuals have opened the newsletter.

There has been an exceptionally strong response to the newsletter from MDA members but also external stakeholders, including numerous government agencies.

5.2 Media releases and talking points

A digital tracker has been created to record media releases and talking points produced by the MDA, commencing 01/02/18. An excerpt will henceforth be included in the CEO's report:

DATE	WHAT	HEADLINE	COMMENT
02/02/2018	Media release	Councils unite to strengthen their influence on Basin management decisions	Issued after the MDA's 2018 Strategic Planning Workshop in Albury. It talked about what was discussed, and what the focus of the MDA would be during the next 12 months.
02/02/2018	Media release	Basin councils united against disallowance motion	Issued in response to Senator Sarah Hanson-Young's disallowance motion against the Basin Plan Amendment, which reduces the water recovery target in the Northern Basin from 390GL to 320 GL.
02/02/2018	Precis and talking points	Responding to MDBA media release: A healthy environment is a healthy community	These talking points were issued in response to the MDBA's media release promoting its technical report 'social and economic benefits from environmental watering'.
6/02/2018	Media release	Halt to water recovery not the solution	Issued in response to the Murray-Darling Declaration, which called for a halt to all publicly funded water recovery through irrigation efficiency programs.
6/02/2018	Precis and talking points	Responding to the Murray-Darling Declaration	In response to the Murray-Darling Declaration.
12/02/2018	Precis and talking points	Responding to the EY Report	In Response to the EY Report - Analysis of efficiency measures in the Murray-Darling Basin
13/02/2018	Media release	Local government commends bipartisan on Basin Plan amendments	Media release welcoming the bipartisan from the VIC and NSW Governments on the Basin Plan Amendments
15/02/2018	Media release	Councils from across the Basin call on all governments to stay the course	Media release criticising the Senate disallowance motion vote and calling on the Government and Opposition to reach agreement on a way forward
15/02/2018	Precis and talking points	Talking points to accompany the above media release.	Talking points to articulate the MDA's position on the Senate disallowance motion vote
20/02/2018	Media release	Basin Plan the best option for communities, the environment and regional economies	Media release detailing the common ground between Cr Thurley and Member for Farrer Sussan Ley on the Senate disallowance motion.

Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer



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Region 11 Report to Board Meeting 373

At this point in time we have canvassed the councils in our region to get an indication of the following:

- 1) their position in respect to the MDA
- 2) are they currently members
- 3) if their membership is lapsed why
- 4) are they planning on keeping their membership. Also that we are letting them know we have taken on the role of chair and would like to advocate for a stronger voice.

At this point we have only had one reply - Moree Plains Shire Council who have indicated they ceased their membership in June 2017.

Our next exercise is to contact water user /irrigator groups to let them know of our position in the MDA.

Cr John Campbell
Chair
Region 11
Murray Darling Association

Councillor
Gunnedah Shire Council



Region 5 Report to Board Meeting 373

1. No Region 5 meeting since our last Board Meeting.
2. I spoke with Riverland Councils (CEO / Mayors / Deputy Mayors) re MDA Position on the Northern review & Disallowance Motion. The Past President of the LGA (SA) Dave Burgess & MR LGA CEO Peter Bond, were present also.
3. I spoke with Tony Pasin (Local Federal Member) re MDA & Disallowance position / confirmation with his personal / party position.
 - a. This was following a forum with all candidates for Chaffey (our state electorate) speaking on various topics. Sadly they chose to speak on the issue which clearly 4 of 5 had no knowledge, while the local member was supportive & knowledgeable of Liberal Party Position. The MC did not allow comment to add any factual information & did not allow Tony Pasin to speak at all. The session was run by the local paper.
4. Riverland Councils have asked MDA Region 5 to provide a position paper on the State Royal Commission - to be canvassed as the opinion of the region / individual councils.
5. I have had a follow up meeting with our CEO around this & he has confirmed the interest in seeking MDA positions for ratification in such matters into the future.
6. Region 5 AGM is to be held at Berri Council Chambers on Monday, 19th March & nominations have been received from all councils bar one, which I will chase.

All the best

Peter

Peter Hunter
Chair
Region 5
Murray Darling Basin

Deputy Mayor
Renmark Paringa Council



Mick Gentleman MLA

Member for Brindabella

Manager of Government Business
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Urban Renewal

RECEIVED
23 FEB 2018

Obj #18/01371

Ms Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer
Murray Darling Association
PO Box 1268
ECHUCA VIC 3564

BY: 

Dear Ms Bradbury 

Thank you for your letter providing your briefing paper to the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council and your project proposal to develop a rigorous and repeatable Water Resource Allocation Community Impacts Assessment and Response Framework.

I have noted your briefing paper and project proposal and agree local governments have a pivotal role to play in the successful implementation of the Basin Plan, particularly in ensuring the involvement of local communities and the need to maximise triple bottom line outcomes. Moreover, there is certainly a need to enhance water literacy and knowledge in local communities.

Your proposal to develop a Water Resource Allocation Community Impacts Assessment and Response Framework is likely to have valuable application for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the larger Basin States especially where they will need to work closely with the various communities across the Basin.

Thank you for your kind offer of a meeting. In the first instance, I have requested officials within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate stay abreast of your funding proposal with a view to engaging further should it meet with funding support from the Australian Government. I invite you to meet with them initially.

I commend the work of the Murray Darling Basin Association and trust that it will continue to advocate for the benefit of Basin communities and the environment.

Yours sincerely


Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for the Environment and Heritage

14/2/18

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