



# 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT





76th annual report of the Murray Darling Association Inc: 2019-20

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Goulburn River, Victoria.  
Picture courtesy of City of Greater Shepparton.

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# INTRODUCTION

This year has been difficult for many communities across the Basin, with bushfires, ongoing drought and now COVID-19 impacting our lives and shaping a new sense of normal.

Now, more than ever before, local government and its communities has a critical role to play in the management of Basin resources if we are to ensure the sustainability, vibrancy and prosperity of the Basin for future generations.

To support our members and the wider Basin community, the Murray Darling Association continues to work alongside our partners and stakeholders to transform some of the great challenges of our time into the opportunities of tomorrow.

These opportunities can only be identified and harnessed by local government and councils working together with foresight and preparedness.

With strength and united in a bold vision, the MDA stands willing and able future focused.

The following report reflects a busy and active nine-month period, including a change in the MDA's financial year and completion of the successful implementation of our Strategic Plan 2016-19.



# NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

This year has been one of great challenges for many of our Basin communities, as they have faced issues of drought, fires and more recently, COVID-19 and its devastating effects on community, health and the economy.

Following this year's devastating fires, the recovery process across much of the Basin has been further slowed by the prolonged effects of run-off into rivers and streams. Good rainfall in February alleviated much of the problem and we were happy to finally flows in the Darling River bringing some welcome relief for communities in western NSW.

In this challenging context it has also been an exciting year of growth and development for the Murray Darling Association. Staff numbers have increased, allowing the Association to respond to the more issues facing Basin communities and meet the increasing workload generated by new projects and the ever-changing political landscape around water issues across all jurisdictions.

Numerous government inquiries into Basin issues were completed this year and the MDA continues to contribute strongly to ensure local government voices are heard at both state and federal level.

One of the MDA's highlights this year was the design and development of the Basin Communities Leadership Program across 15 locations in the Basin. The program has generated high levels of engagements despite the delays to delivery impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.



Restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have seen the MDA respond by hosting our first ever virtual national conference and AGM, demonstrating yet again that we are forever adaptable and future focused.

Hosted in partnership with Shepparton, the conference theme will be **Local Leadership: A National Priority**.

MDA membership has never been more important. We encourage councils across the Basin to join the MDA and work together to create the future we need for our Basin communities..

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Thurley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**David Thurley**  
National President

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

---

This year's Annual Report reflects an intensely challenging year for Basin communities, characterised by a sequence of catastrophic events including ongoing drought, devastating bushfires, and a pandemic.

Recent COVID 19 restrictions have seen the Murray Darling Association, like so many others, having to adapt and respond in the way we do business and the way we deliver services.

We have realigned project plans and deliverables which has impacted funding and cashflow, has intensified workloads and has required creative attention to managing and meeting expectations.

We have restructured the way we work, the way we communicate, and the way we meet. We have met the challenges and identified some exciting opportunities.

And we have prepared to deliver our first ever fully virtual national conference and AGM in this, our 77th year unbroken in delivering that event.

This year has also seen the successful completion of our Strategic Plan 2016-19. I am intensely proud of the hard work and dedication of this organisation, its staff, and the Board in delivering on the actions objectives of that Plan to position the MDA and our member council to face an uncertain future with a clear and determined vision.



An amazing workload has been delivered by the whole team at the MDA with a change to our reporting year. With only nine months in this transitional reporting period we have achieved a great deal in a very short time.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and leadership of our National President Cr David Thurley, the important contributions of the full MDA Board and our wonderful staff

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Bradbury', written over a horizontal line.

**Emma Bradbury**  
Chief Executive Officer

# OUR ORGANISATION: BOARD PERFORMANCE

| Board                  | Hosting Council               | Region                                    | Commenced  | Finished   |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|------------|------------|
| ● Cr David Thurley     | Albury City Council           | Chair Region 1 - President                |            |            |
| ● Cr Dennis Patterson  | Shepparton City Council       | Chair Region 2                            |            |            |
| ● Cr Jane MacAllister  | Wentworth Shire Council       | Chair Region 4                            |            |            |
| ● Cr Peter Hunter      | Renmark Paringa Council       | Chair Region 5                            |            | 16/03/2020 |
| ● Cr Peter Raison      | Mid Murray Council            | Chair Region 5                            | 16/03/2020 |            |
| ● Cr Melissa Rebbeck   | Alexandrina Shire Council     | Chair Region 6                            |            |            |
| ● Cr Andrew Tilley     | City of Mitcham               | Chair Region 7                            |            |            |
| ● Mayor Denis Clark    | Northern Areas Council        | Chair Region 8                            |            | 29/11/2019 |
| ● Cr Brian Lockyer     | District Council Barunga West | Chair Region 8                            |            |            |
| ● Cr Paul Maytom       | Leeton Shire Council          | Chair Region 9                            |            |            |
| ● Mayor Phyllis Miller | Forbes Shire Council          | Chair Region 10                           | 29/08/2019 |            |
| ● Cr John Campbell     | Gunnedah Shire Council        | Chair Region 11                           |            |            |
| ● Mayor Richard Marsh  | Balonne Shire Council         | Chair Region 12                           |            | 28/03/2020 |
| Pete George            | M&S Group                     | <i>Treasurer</i>                          |            |            |
| Emma Bradbury          | Murray Darling Association    | <i>Chief Executive and Public Officer</i> |            |            |



Cr David Thurley



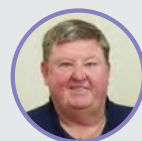
Cr Dennis Patterson



Cr Jane MacAllister



Cr Peter Hunter



Cr Peter Raison



Cr Melissa Rebbeck



Cr Andrew Tilley



Cr Denis Clark



Cr Brian Lockyer



Cr Paul Maytom



Mayor Phyllis Miller



Cr John Campbell



Mayor Samantha O'Toole



Pete George



Emma Bradbury

## APPRECIATING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF:



Cr Denis Clark  
Region 8



Cr Peter Hunter  
Region 5



Cr Richard Marsh  
Region 12



# OUR ORGANISATION: MEETINGS RECORD

## BOARD MEETINGS

|                      | Meeting 388<br>July 29, 2019 | Meeting 389<br>August 26, 2019 | Meeting 390<br>October 10, 2019 | Meeting 391- AGM<br>October 23, 2019 | Meeting 392<br>November 25, 2019 | Meeting 393<br>December 16, 2019 | Meeting 394<br>January 20th, 2020 | Meeting 395<br>February 17th, 2020 | Meeting 396<br>March 20th, 2020 |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cr David Thurley     | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Cr Denis Patterson   | ✓                            | X                              | A                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Cr Jane MacAllister  | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | A                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Cr Peter Hunter      | ✓                            | ✓                              | A                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  |                                 |
| Cr Peter Raison      |                              |                                |                                 |                                      |                                  |                                  |                                   |                                    | A                               |
| Cr Melissa Rebbeck   | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | P                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Cr Andrew Tilley     | A                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | A                                | X                                 | ✓                                  | X                               |
| Mayor Denis Clark    | A                            | ✓                              | A                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                |                                  |                                   |                                    |                                 |
| Cr Brian Lockyer     |                              |                                |                                 | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Cr Paul Maytom       | ✓                            | ✓                              | A                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Mayor Phyllis Miller | A                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | P                                    | A                                | A                                | A                                 | ✓                                  | A                               |
| Cr John Campbell     | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |
| Mayor Richard Marsh  | ✓                            | ✓                              | A                               | ✓                                    | A                                | ✓                                | A                                 | A                                  | ✓                               |
| Pete George          | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | A                                  | A                               |
| Emma Bradbury        | ✓                            | ✓                              | ✓                               | ✓                                    | ✓                                | ✓                                | ✓                                 | ✓                                  | ✓                               |

Attendance key: ✓ Attendance registered    A Apology received    P Attendance by Proxy    X Non-attendance

## REGION MEETINGS

Region meetings play an important role in initiating and facilitating discussion on regional and Basin issues, providing members, executive and guests to exchange information and identify priorities, and develop strategies and solutions.

| REGION | 07-19 | 08-19       | 09-19  | 10-19  | 11-19       | 12-19  | 01-20 | 02-20       | 03-20  |
|--------|-------|-------------|--------|--------|-------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|
| 1      |       | Red         |        |        | Red         |        |       | Red         |        |
| 2      |       |             |        |        |             | Blue   |       |             | Blue   |
| 3      |       |             |        |        |             |        |       |             |        |
| 4      |       |             | Pink   |        |             |        | Pink  |             | Pink   |
| 5      |       |             | Purple |        |             | Purple |       |             | Purple |
| 6      |       | Orange      | Orange | Orange |             | Orange |       | Orange      |        |
| 7      |       | Yellow      |        |        | Yellow      |        |       | Yellow      |        |
| 8      | Green |             |        |        | Green       |        |       | Green       |        |
| 9      |       | Yellow      |        |        |             |        |       |             | Yellow |
| 10     |       | Cyan        |        |        |             |        |       |             |        |
| 11     |       | Light Green |        |        | Light Green |        |       | Light Green |        |
| 12     |       |             |        |        |             |        |       |             |        |

The MDA Strategic Advisory Group meets quarterly to consider and make recommendations on matters referred to them by the Board.

## STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP

| Members  | #006<br>1-7-19 | #007<br>9-9-19 | #008<br>28-1-20 |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Qld Representative<br>Matt Magin<br>Balonne Shire Council                | ✓              | ✓              | ✓               |
| NSW Representative #1<br>Adrian Butler, GM<br>Federation Council         | ✓              | A              | A               |
| NSW Representative #2<br>Steve Loane, GM<br>Forbes Shire Council         | A              | A              | A               |
| SA Representative<br>Brenton Lewis, Mayor<br>Rural City of Murray Bridge | ✓              | ✓              | ✓               |
| Victorian Representative<br>Vacant                                       |                |                |                 |
| Pete George, MDA Treasurer<br>Board Representative                       | A              | A              | ✓               |
| Emma Bradbury, MDA CEO<br>Secretariat                                    | ✓              | ✓              | ✓               |

# REGION 1 REPORT



Region 1 comprises total of 14 councils, of which 6 are members of the MDA. Region 1 has 1 individual member. The committee is made up of

## Chair

Cr David Thurley Albury City Council

## Committee members

Cr Bernard Gaffney Indigo Shire Council

Cr David Wortmann Towong Shire Council

## Members

Albury City Council

Federation Council

Greater Hume Shire Council

Indigo Shire Council

Snowy Valleys Council

Towong Shire Council

## Individual Members

Geoff Lucas

## Other Eligible Councils

Alpine Shire Council

Baw Baw Shire Council

Benalla Rural City Council

East Gippsland Shire Council

Mansfield Shire Council

Snowy Monaro Regional Council

Rural City of Wangaratta

Wodonga City Council

Three region meetings were held during the year.

| Date                      | Location                                |
|---------------------------|---|
| Friday 21 February 2020   | Albury City Council                     |
| Friday 22nd November 2019 | Federation Council, Corowa Civic Centre |
| Friday 23rd August 2019   | Albury City Council                     |

Speakers addressed members at two of the region meetings. Topics covered including Climate Information Services and an assessment of the West Corugan scheme together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system itself. A workshop session was held in February to identify issues of particular concern to Region 1.

## Speakers:

- ▶ Dr Lynette Bettio, Senior Climatologist Bureau of Meteorology
- ▶ Andrew Kelly, General Manager West Corugan Private Irrigation District

Many parts of Region 1 were accutely affected by this year's bushfires, causing significant damage to our communities and loss of property.

Following the bushfires, our region continued to be impacted as large amounts of ash and debris were washed into local creeks and rivers after the first significant rainfall.

Water storages remain low with Hume Dam below 15pc and Dartmouth at less than 50pc.

Some rain has fallen across the catchment of both storages but the outlook for the year ahead is concerning when starting from such a low level.



Snowy River

I would like to thank all Region 1 member councils for their dedicated participation and involvement in our region and the MDA, as well as their continued support for their communities during these trying times.

Cr David Thurley  
Chair, Region 1





# REGION 2 REPORT

Region 2 comprises a total of 13 councils, of which 4 are members of the MDA. Region 2 has two individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Cr Dennis Patterson Greater Shepparton City Council

## Committee members

Cr Colin Jones Berrigan Shire Council

Cr Roger Reynoldson Berrigan Shire Council

Cr Peter Mansfield Moira Shire Council

## Members

Berrigan Shire Council

Edwards River Council

Greater Shepparton City Council

Moira Shire Council

## Individual Members

Murray Irrigation

Geoff Mackenzie

Ken Pattison (R3)

Geoff Mackenzie (R3)

## Other Eligible Councils

Campaspe Shire Council

City of Greater Bendigo

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Mitchell Shire Council

Murray Shire Council

Murrindindi Shire Council

Strathbogie Shire Council

Whittlesea City Council

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

2 informal meetings of members were held during the year.

| Date            | Location |
|-----------------|----------|
| 16 January 2020 | Cobram   |
| March           | Region 2 |

Topics covered were the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan on the Southern Basin, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself.

Since being elected to the Chair in May 2019 however, as Chair, I attended the Annual General Meeting and Annual Conference in Toowoomba in October 2019.

The implementation of COVID-19 restrictions has impacted on meetings and travel and therefore meetings held for this region have been informal, but no less important. Member councils have consulted widely with their communities to establish a united position on our collective approach to the recovery of the 450GL by March.

I have been a regular attendee at board meetings.

As Chair of Region 2 I have met with DELWP regarding the inquiry into environmental damage caused to the lower Goulburn River from inter valley transfers as well as the impact on the Barmah Choke.

I have also been meeting with the Victorian Fishing Authority. The Authority has been working in conjunction with the Arthur Rylah Institute on the impact of high river flows during summer.

Research demonstrates a decrease of approximately 20pc in Murray Cod numbers over the last 3 years. Work is also currently being conducted on the impact of cold water on the breeding of invertebrates within the Goulburn River during summer.

Region 2 consists of several councils that have been severely affected by water issues. Distress over the loss of productive water across the region has seen several water groups formed including Can the Plan.

Region 2 councils have, as a whole, supported these groups creating both a challenge and opportunity for the MDA to demonstrate leadership and relevance in this area in the face of ongoing opposition from community advocacy groups.

COVID-19 has challenged our communities both socially and economically, and with agriculture and food processing keeping a lot of our communities going at the moment, the importance of water security is more evident than ever and reinforces just how important a role we have to play in this space.

At its March engagement Region 2 determined to focus on the following issues in the next 12 months:

- ▶ provide information and education to other MDA regions on the issues surrounding the constraints of transferring water through the lower Goulburn River and the Barmah Choke
- ▶ ensure that the transfer of water between regions only be allowed following independent socio-economic analysis that proves that such transfers do not cause negative socio-economic issues in regions that water is being transferred from
- ▶ ensure that the environmental values of the lower Goulburn River and the Barmah Choke are protected from damage through higher river flows for inter valley transfers
- ▶ promote the advantages of established irrigated agriculture with the Region 2 geographic area.



Cr Dennis Patterson  
Chair, Region 2.



# REGION 4 REPORT

Region 4 comprises a total of 8 councils, of which 5 are members of the MDA. Region 4 has 1 life member, Mr Brian Grogan OAM. The committee is made up of:

| <b>Chair</b>             |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cr Jane MacAllister      | Wentworth Shire Council    |
| <b>Committee members</b> |                            |
| Cr Marion Brown          | Broken Hill City Council   |
| Cr Jason Modica          | Mildura Rural City Council |
| Cr Tim Elstone           | Wentworth Shire Council    |
| Cr Steve Heywood         | Wentworth Shire Council    |

| <b>Members</b>             |
|----------------------------|
| Balranald Shire Council    |
| Broken Hill City Council   |
| Central Darling Shire      |
| Mildura Rural City Council |
| Wentworth Shire Council    |
| <b>Individual Members</b>  |
| Mr Brian Grogan OAM        |

| <b>Other Eligible Councils</b> |
|--------------------------------|
| Hindmarsh Shire Council        |
| West Wimmera Shire Council     |
| Yarriambiack Shire Council     |

3 meetings were held during the year:

| <b>Date</b>               | <b>Location</b>                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tuesday 10 March 2020     | The Midway Centre, Buronga, NSW |
| Wednesday 29 January 2020 | The Midway Centre, Buronga, NSW |
| Tuesday 24 September 2019 | The Midway Centre, Buronga, NSW |

Two speakers addressed members, one at September meeting and one in March. Topics covered were algae control using ultrasound and an update on the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself.

**Speakers:**

- ▶ Peter Harries, EnviroSonic
- ▶ Richard Mintern, Local Engagement Officer Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

From the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Darling rivers along the Murray to the South Australian border, Region 4 remains in drought and has arguably been hit hardest, with the NSW Natural Resources Commissioner declaring the Darling River "...an ecosystem in crisis."

All councils in Region 4 are supportive of RAMSAR listing for the Menindee Lakes and see the SDLAM water savings project as one of the biggest threats to the region.

Several meetings were attended throughout the year, including the Toorale infrastructure project, floodplain harvesting information session, draft Water Resources Plan and draft Water Sharing Plan Information meetings and the Tocumwal rally.

The MDBA Socio-Economic Roundtable was a particularly difficult forum to witness and participate in, as fifth generation family farmers had recently been forced to terminate their businesses, destroy crops which had spearheaded a specialised citrus varietal export into China but could no longer continue, due to lack of water in the Darling river. Workers employed for 30 years were let go and the Darling river townships were at their lowest.

Region chair Cr MacAllister attended the 10th Water Symposium and garnered legal support and agency information about the cause and impact of inequity in interpretation of the plan and particularly policy and management by NSW government.

Wentworth and Central Darling Shire representatives attended the LGNSW Water Conference in Albury with new Director Roads and Engineering and made strong contacts, and received valuable information.

The discovery of critically endangered purple-spotted gudgeon at Reedy Lake near Kerang resulted in a shift in focus from the Victorian Water Minister, the lake no longer to be dried and protections increased.

Region 4 had strong attendance at the Toowoomba national conference and Cr Browne and Cr Modica also joined the tour of Cubbie station. There was strong media interest in the RAMSAR motion carried at the National conference and the delegates' tour of Cubbie station.

Consultations occurred in Mildura by the ACCC, an inquiry into water markets had around 200 attendees and some concerns loudly raised. Interim Inspector-General, Mick Keely also consulted a room of more than 100 locals in Mildura, but not the Darling river communities.

Visits by NSW Shadow Water Minister, Clayton Barr, SA Senator Rex Patrick, the CEO of the Nature Conservation

## REGION 4 REPORT CONTINUED

Council of NSW and journalists Margaret Simons for Quarterly Essay and Matthew Campbell from Bloombergs among many others have provided support and increased understanding both in policy and among the wider population.

Critical Water Advisory Panel updates were a moveable feast, as embargoes were imposed ahead of forecast rain and restrictions around floodplain harvesting lifted for a few days, then embargoes lifted for A, B, C class irrigators, permitted to take water after head flows had passed, based on calculations of a target for Menindee, which would provide 12-18 months of drought reserve for the lower Darling river stakeholders.

Ahead of flows arriving, electrical conductivity at Wilcannia was 4000. Bores at both Wilcannia and Menindee also hypersaline, rendering water undrinkable. Pooncarie had zero water and the hot dry meant contingency measures had to be implemented urgently, switching from rapidly dwindling pools of stagnant water in the river to putting down bores and installing new tanks and telemetry at council's expense and having to put the town on water restrictions to attract NSW Government assistance.

With some good rains in February, not yet drought breaking, the Darling and Murray rivers were once more connected and the focus turned to ensuring that what has been endured must never be suffered again and that equity and balance is restored to water management, for the health of the rivers, the communities which rely on them and the industries built from those communities

We are yet to discover how many species have been lost, and found, along our great rivers.



Cr Jane MacAllister  
Chair, Region 4.



*A photo of Red Cliffs, located in the Mildura Rural City Council area - Region 4.  
Picture courtesy: Mildura Rural City Council.*



# REGION 5 REPORT

Region 5 comprises a total of 5 councils, of which all 5 are members of the MDA. Region 5 has 2 individual members. The committee is made up of:

| Chair                     |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Cr Peter Raison – current | Mid Murray Council - commencing March 2020       |
| Cr Peter Hunter – past    | Renmark Paringa Council March 2016 to March 2020 |
| Committee members         |  |
| Cr Andrew Kassebaum       | Berri Barmera Council                            |
| Cr Peter Walker           | District Council of Loxton Waikerie              |
| Cr Yvonne Smith           | District Council of Karoonda East Murray         |
| Cr Margaret Howie         | Renmark Paringa Council                          |

| Member Councils                          |
|--|
| Berri Barmera Council                    |
| District Council of Karoonda East Murray |
| District Council of Loxton Waikerie      |
| Mid Murray Council                       |
| Renmark Paringa Council                  |
| Members (Individuals/Organisations)      |
| Ian and Bobby Mann                       |
| Malcolm Wilske                           |

Self-appointed mascot and expedition commander Admiral Murray 'Muzz' at the command.

3 meetings were held during the year:

| Date                    | Location                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monday 16 March 2020    | Renmark Paringa Council Chambers |
| Monday 9 December 2019  | Karoonda Council Chambers        |
| Monday 9 September 2019 | Morgan & Districts Community Hub |

Four speakers addressed members at each meeting. Topics covered were proposed amendments to Carry over policy, Water stewardship, Social and economic integration, CEWO update, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself.

**Speakers:**

- ▶ James John, Legal and Project Manager Renmark Irrigation Trust
- ▶ Megan Taylor, Water and Administration Manager Renmark Irrigation Trust
- ▶ Neville Crossman, Director, Social and Economic Integration, MDBA
- ▶ Michelle Campbell, Local Engagement Officer



Commonwealth Environment Water

In November outgoing Chair Peter Hunter lead a flotilla of vessels that traversed our mighty system from Echuca to Wentworth. Self-appointed mascot and expedition commander Admiral Murray 'Muzz' provided a daily blog, shared with the MDA and students from Stirling East Primary School as they continued their studies of the Murray-Darling. Region 5 extends from the Victorian Border, Renmark Paringa Council, to areas below Mannum, Mid-Murray Council.

Information from key stakeholders has been regularly distributed to councils and we have taken the opportunity to speak to aspects of our meetings/initiatives at the Murraylands & Riverland LGA meetings, our regional grouping of councils.

We have continued our rotation of meeting venues to each of the council areas in our MDA region. This year we're especially pleased to welcome Karoonda East Murray & Yvonne Smith as active members.

We're also pleased to be able to welcome a new private member with Malcolm Wilsch, joining us mid-year.



Peter Hunter  
Outgoing Chair, Region 5.



Peter Raison  
Incoming Chair, Region 5.

# REGION 6 REPORT



Region 6 comprises a total of 7 councils, of which 6 are members of the MDA. Region 6 has 5 individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Cr Melissa Rebbeck      Alexandrina Council

## Committee members

Bridget Mather      Coorong District Council  
 Heather Barclay      Rural City of Murray Bridge  
 Glenn Rappensberg      Alexandrina Council

## Members

Alexandrina Council  
 Coorong District Council  
 Rural City of Murray Bridge  
 Tatiara District Council  
 City of Victor Harbour  
 Southern Mallee District Council

## Members (Individuals/Organisations)

Keith Loeser  
 Julie Barrie  
 Frank Tuckwell  
 Bruce Brooks  
 Adrian Pederick MP

## Other Eligible Councils

Kingston City Council

5 meetings were held during the year including a MDA Region 6 Stakeholder Symposium in September 2019 - titled Working together to secure a healthy future for the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong.

| Date                        | Location                          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Friday 14 February 2020     | Murray Bridge                     |
| Friday 13 December 2019     | Alexandrina Council Chambers      |
| Friday 11 October 2019      | Coorong District Council Chambers |
| Wednesday 25 September 2019 | Fleurieu Function Centre          |
| Friday 9 August 2019        | Alexandrina Council Chambers      |

Speakers addressed members at meetings. Topics covered were MDBA's Aboriginal Partnerships team, Irrigation efficiency projects, Coorong Environmental Trust, social and economic integration section, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself.

## Speakers:

- ▶ Ken Scott, Assistant MDBA
- ▶ Neville Crossman, Director, Social and Economic Integration Section MDBA
- ▶ Faith Coleman, Founding Partner EcoProTem
- ▶ Michael Cutting, Project Manager Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin (Natural Resources SAMDB)

For Region 6 this has been an interesting and challenging year with the worst drought ever on record and lowest flows ever into the MDB. There have been constant requests to respond to the implementation of the MDB Plan which needed considered response.

On top of our bi-monthly meetings and monthly board meetings, the Chair, Cr Melissa Rebbeck, attended meetings of the CLIMM CAP and CLIMM SAG, the Alexandrina Council Environmental Advisory Panel, Dairy Industry Fund Board, Sustainable Agriculture Round Table, Fleurieu Farming Systems, Fleurieu Beef Group and the SA Livestock Consultants Groups to keep on top of issues effecting these groups and communities; and meetings in Murray Bridge and at Goolwa on water allocations.

In September 2019, Region 6 hosted a stakeholder symposium with many of the regional groups working on river issues. Here we discussed our individual priorities and how to work together better collectively to achieve a greater outcome. A report has been circulated with the outcomes and recommendations now being part of Region 6's strategic plan for 20-21.

In late September 2019, we coordinated an inter-regional meeting between all of the state MDA chairs and our state advisor at LGA House and were welcomed to work with the LGA on the 2020 review of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

In October 2019, the Chair along with other R6 members, attended the MDA national conference in Toowoomba where we presented 6 motions, which were all endorsed by the national board and in addition all of our amendments were accepted. The motions included drought preparedness, regional chair post local government elections, proxy attendance at MDA board meetings, investment in nutrient load research, agricultural productivity target and population growth.

# REGION 6 REPORT CONTINUED



Lower Murray River at Hindmarsh Island across to North Goolwa. Picture courtesy: Monika Rhodes

Find out about important  
Murray–Darling Basin issues,  
outcomes and priorities.

Subscribe to our stakeholder e-newsletter

 [mdba.gov.au/river-reach](http://mdba.gov.au/river-reach)

## RIVER REACH



Australian Government



Region 6 shared information with the board and fellow regions promoting the good work that SA and our region is doing including the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Action Plan which aims to provide projects between 2019-24 to get the Coorong back on track for a healthy future.

Other projects promoted include the Coorong Environmental Trust Bill which aims to support longitudinal monitoring and data collection, State of the estuary reporting and increased stakeholder collaboration in support of a healthy Coorong.

Region 6 responded to several requests, including but not limited to information the water commissioner enquiries into water trading, ABC's 4 Corner Report about water trading and water infrastructure and more.

Some particular issues that the Chair responded to on behalf of Region 6 at the board level include advocacy around no Lock Zero, coordinating and supporting information to the board re the historical fresh water nature of the lower lakes, advocacy around the work SA has done to input water infrastructure measures such as the low flows, the need for our barrages and more.

Region 6 responded to several requests, including but not limited to information the water commissioner enquiries into water trading, ABC's 4 Corner Report about water trading and water infrastructure and more.

Much thanks goes to the executive committee and general members as a combined effort for the above mentioned workload. In addition thanks so much to secretary Monika Rhodes for her tireless work supporting a very active membership.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melissa'.

Cr Melissa Rebbeck  
Chair, Region 6.





# REGION 7 REPORT

Region 7 comprises a total of 21 councils, of which 8 are members of the MDA. Region 7 has 3 individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Cr Andrew Tilley City of Mitcham

## Committee members

Cr John Kennedy Campbelltown City Council  
 Cr Shirley Halls City of Playford  
 Cr Robin Coleman City of Tea Tree Gully

## Member Councils

Adelaide Hills Council  
 City of Burnside  
 Campbelltown City Council  
 City of Holdfast Bay  
 City of Mitcham  
 City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters  
 City of Playford  
 City of Tea Tree Gully

## Members (Individuals/Organisations)

Frank and Fran Verrall  
 Rex Adams  
 Ray Najjar

## Other Eligible Councils

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| City of Onkaparinga  | City of Port Adelaide Enfield  |
| Town of Walkerville  | City of Charles Sturt          |
| Town of Gawler       | Mount Barker District Council  |
| City of Prospect     | City of Salisbury              |
| City of Unley        | District Council of Yankalilla |
| City of Marion       | City of Adelaide               |
| City of West Torrens |                                |

3 meetings were held during the year:

| Date                      | Location                 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Thursday 20 February 2020 | City of Tea Tree Gully   |
| Thursday 21 November 2019 | City of Mitcham chambers |
| Thursday 22 August 2019   | City of Mitcham chambers |

3 speakers addressed members at each meeting. Topics covered were Murray Darling Basin Authority and Basin Community Committee update, Citizen science department, motivation for MDBA's review of Coorong, Lower Lakes, and Murray Mouth management together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system.

## Speakers included:

- ▶ Ms Deana Mildren, Regional Engagement Officer MDBA
- ▶ Ms Sylvia Clarke, Citizen Science Project Officer Department Environment Water Natural Resources
- ▶ Dr Tariq Laattoe, Senior Groundwater Modeller Innovative Groundwater Solutions

Meetings were well attended with an average of twenty members including private members and life member Pauline Frost. Presentations covered topics on Groundwater Modelling, opposing views about the Lower Lakes, maintaining and enhancing the barrages.

MDBA Regional Engagement Officer Deana Mildren was a regular attendee, and MDA Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury zoomed to provide reports from the executive.



River Torrens, Adelaide

A presentation from Ray Najjar, who explained his plan for the Lower Lakes that maintains accessibility for rural producers around the lakes and involves deepening the mouth with side barriers out into Encounter Bay beyond the sand movement caused by wave action provoked some lively discussion.

This year also saw the completion of the phasing out of discounted rates for region 7 councils. This has been a longstanding and controversial issue, and paves the way for a broader discussion on membership fees across the organisation.



Cr Andrew Tilley  
 Chair, Region 7.



# REGION 8 REPORT

Region 8 comprises a total of 16 councils, of which 8 are members of the MDA. Region 8 has no individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Cr Brian Lockyer                      Barunga West Council

## Committee members

Cr Phillip Heaslip                      District Council of Mount Remarkable

Cr Denis Clark                      Northern Areas Council

## Member Councils

District Council of Barunga West

The Regional Council of Goyder

Light Regional Council

Northern Areas Council

The District Council of Peterborough

Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council

District Council of Orroroo Carrieton

District Council of Mount Remarkable

## Other Eligible Councils

Wakefield Regional Council

Adelaide Plains Council

Copper Coast Council

Yorke Peninsula Council

Port Augusta City Council

Port Pirie Regional Council

Whyalla City Council

The Barossa Council

3 meetings were held during the year:

| Date                    | Location                       |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Friday 28 February 2020 | Valleys Lifestyle Centre Clare |
| Friday 29 November 2019 | Port Broughton Bowling Club    |
| Friday 12 July 2019     | Clare Country Club             |

One guest speaker addressed members at the July 2019 meeting. Mayor Brenton Lewis spoke to Region 8 about the MDA and its representation of local government in the Murray-Darling Basin space.

## Speakers:

- ▶ Mayor Brenton Lewis, Member of MDA Strategic Advisory Group  
MDA

The MDA acknowledges the hard work of Cr Denis Clark as the outgoing chair of Region 8.

Cr Clark warmly endorsed Cr Brian Lockyer as District Council of Barunga West's nomination to chair the region on 29 November 2019. The following report is from Cr Lockyer, Chair of Region 8.

2019-20 has been an eventful period. With bushfires, flooding and now Covid-19, we have had some challenging times. Region 8 has not been exempt from any of the above. We have all come together within our communities to protect and make our loved ones safe.

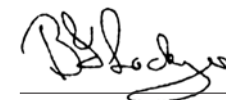
11-12 March 2020, I attended the MDA strategic workshop in Moama NSW, which was a very fulfilling opportunity to meet fellow region chairs, members and MDA staff.

Input from region chairs and members as well as representatives of CSIRO was vast and debated, and outcomes were impressive. One suggestion was increased

inter-regional education via region reports outlining problems/results within their regions. This will put other regions to the understanding of what the region is achieving, and results.

Membership remains a challenge to the MDA, but the work done by Emma and the Murray Darling Association has had some brilliant achievements and the more representation we can have to advocate to federal and state governments, the better outcomes we can create together.

Following COVID-19, we hope to get back to some sense of normality. This reality will not be the same as we are used to as we will return to a different world. I hope that you all are safe and well and looking forward to catching up soon.



Cr Brian Lockyer  
Chair, Region 8



# REGION 9 REPORT



Region 9 comprises a total of 18 councils, of which 8 are members of the MDA. Region 9 has 3 individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Cr Paul Maytom Leeton Shire Council

## Committee members

Brett Stonestreet Griffith City Council  
 Bede Spannagle Riverina Water County Council  
 Wagga Wagga City Council  
 Narrandera Shire Council  
 Mr Joe Burns Individual Member

## Member Councils

Griffith City Council  
 Hay Shire Council  
 Leeton Shire Council  
 Lockhart Shire Council  
 Narrandera Shire Council  
 Murrumbidgee Shire Council  
 Wagga Wagga City Council  
 Carrathool Shire Council

## Members (Individuals/Organisations)

Riverina Water County Council  
 Joe Burns  
 Michael McCormack MP

## Other Eligible Councils

Bega Valley Shire Council  
 Coolamon Shire Council  
 Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
 Eurobodalla Shire Council  
 Hilltops Shire Council  
 Junee Shire Council  
 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council  
 Temora Shire Council  
 Weddin Shire Council  
 Yass Valley Council

2 meetings were held during the year:

| Date                    | Location                      |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Thursday 29 August 2019 | Leeton Shire Council Chambers |
| Monday 23 March 2020    | Leeton Shire Council Chambers |

1 speaker addressed members at each meeting. At the August 2019 meeting topics covered were: a CEWO update, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself. At the March 2020 meeting, ground water access and licencing for bores was discussed along with understanding extraction limits and metering and where ground water can be traded.

## Speakers:

- ▶ Jody Swirepik, Chief Executive Commonwealth Environmental Water Office
- ▶ Tracie Scarfone, Senior Water Regulation Officer Water NSW

Another busy year has occurred in Region 9, where I have attended many water related forums and meetings with Water NSW, River Operators Stakeholder Consultation Committee Meetings, Yanco SDLAM Community Advisory Group.

Water prices and drought continued to have a detrimental effect on Region 9. Due to the ongoing drought and issues associated with water policy there have been many job losses in our region across several agricultural industries. While there recently has been a small increase in general security water allocation in the MIA we still require a lot more rain in the catchment area for irrigators to have more certainty for planting crops.

February rains gave some hope to our farmers and lifted the spirit of our community, who, like everyone else are going through the Covid-19 pandemic.



Region 9 meeting. Council Chambers Leeton.

We are hopeful of a better season to help lift our local economy. We must however continue to advocate with state and federal governments and the MDBA to ensure sustainability of our region.

Mayor Paul Maytom  
 Chair, Region 9.





# REGION 10 REPORT

Region 10 comprises a total of 25 councils, of which 7 are members of the MDA. Region 10 has 1 individual members. The committee is made up of:

## Chair

Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM Forbes Shire Council

## Committee members

Cr Janine Lea-Barrett Cobar Shire Council

Cr Ben Shields Dubbo Regional Council

Cr John Medcalf Lachlan Shire Council

Cr Craig Davies Narromine Shire Council

## Member Councils

Bourke Shire Council

Cobar Shire Council

Dubbo Regional Council

Forbes Shire Council

Lachlan Shire Council

Narromine Shire Council

Warren Shire Council

Cowra Shire Council

## Members (Individuals/Organisations)

Jack Bennet

## Other Eligible Councils

Mid-Western Regional Council Bland Shire Council

Bathurst Regional Council Bogan Shire Council

Blayney Shire Council City of Lithgow Council

Cabonne Council Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Gilgandra Shire Council Oberon Council

Muswellbrook Shire Council Parkes Shire Council

Orange City Council Upper Hunter Shire Council

Warrumbungle Shire Council Singleton Shire Council

Upper Lachlan Shire Council

1 meeting was held during the year:

| Date                    | Location  |
|-------------------------|---|
| Thursday 29 August 2019 | Dubbo Regional Council<br>Civic Administration Building |

One speaker addressed members at the meeting. Topics covered were effects of drought and Murray-Darling Basin Plan on the Lachlan Valley together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system, itself.

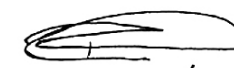
Speaker:

- ▶ Mary Ewing, Executive Officer  
Lachlan Valley Water

Region 10 had its first meeting on August 2019, against a background of worsening drought conditions.

Region 10 would like to warmly welcome Cowra Shire Council to Region 10 and the Murray Darling Association.

We look forward to future meetings, focused on regional priorities and how communities can thrive during these current trying circumstances.

Cr Phyllis Miller OAM  
Chair Region 10



Left to right: Cr Mark Halls, Lachlan Shire; Michael McMahon, GM Dubbo Regional Council; Mayor Phyllis Miller, Forbes Shire; Emma Bradbury, CEO, Mayor Ben Shields, Dubbo; Steve Loan, GM Forbes Shire Council. Dubbo. August 2019.

# REGION 11 REPORT



Region 11 comprises a total of 15 councils, of which 6 are members of the MDA. The committee is made up of:

| Chair             |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Cr John Campbell  | Gunnedah Shire Council    |
| Committee members |                           |
| Cr Jamie Chaffey  | Gunnedah Shire Council    |
| Cr Andrew Johns   | Gunnedah Shire Council    |
| Cr Frances Young  | Gwydir Shire Council      |
| Rebel Thomson     | Namoi Councils            |
| Cr Greg Sauer     | Tenterfield Shire Council |

| Member Councils           |
|---------------------------|
| Brewarrina Shire Council  |
| Gunnedah Shire Council    |
| Gwydir Shire Council      |
| Tenterfield Shire Council |
| Walgett Shire Council     |
| Liverpool Plains Shire    |

| Other Eligible Councils    |
|----------------------------|
| Coonamble Shire Council    |
| Armidale Dumaresq Council  |
| Glen Innes Severn Council  |
| Inverell Shire Council     |
| Narrabri Shire Council     |
| Tamworth Regional Council  |
| Uralla Shire Council       |
| Walcha Council             |
| Moree Plains Shire Council |

3 meetings were held during the year:

| Date                      | Location               |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Thursday 20 February 2020 | Warialda Shire Council |
| Thursday 7 November 2019  | Gunnedah Shire Council |
| Friday 9 August 2019      | Walgett Sports Club    |

3 speakers addressed members at each meeting. Topics covered were an MDBA update, advocacy for rural business, together with broader issues relating to the Murray Darling system itself.

Speakers:

- ▶ Annabelle Guest, Regional Engagement Officer MDBA
- ▶ Juliana McArthur, President Gunnedah Business Chamber Gunnedah
- ▶ Dr Peta Derham, Executive Director of Water Resource Planning and Accounting MDBA

While we have had some patchy, good falls of rain in areas of the region the drought is nowhere near broken. Falls we received actually allowed some rivers to run for the first time in two years. Hopefully, the breaking of the drought is not too far away.

As a region we have drafted a climate ready communities position statement which we hope will be adopted at the MDA's national conference next year.

Thank you to the councils for their input and our secretariat Alex O'Keefe for her support throughout the year.

Cr John Campbell  
Chair, Region 11.



Picture courtesy: Gunnedah Shire Council



# REGION 12 REPORT



Region 12 comprises a total of 15 councils, of which 5 are members of the MDA. Region 12 has 1 individual member:

## Chair

Mayor Richard Marsh  
– Outgoing Chair      Balonne Shire Council

Mayor Samantha O’Toole  
– Incoming Chair      Balonne Shire Council

## Committee members

### Member Councils

- Balonne Shire Council
- Goondiwindi Regional Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Western Downs Regional Council

### Members (Individuals/Organisations)

David Sheil

### Other Eligible Councils

- Blackall Tambo Regional Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Maranoa Regional Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- South Burnett Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council

No meetings were held during the year.

The MDA acknowledges the hard work and dedication of Cr Richard Marsh as the outgoing chair of Region 12. Following Queensland local government elections at the end of March 2020, Cr Samantha O’Toole was elected as the Mayor and is the new incoming chair of Region 12.

The following report is from Cr Marsh, outgoing chair of Region 12.

Region 12 has been drought-declared for the past seven years. Earlier this year we were fortunate to have some rain which led to a run in the Balonne River. It’s been great to see that run work its way down the Darling system. It has not, however, seen an end to the drought. We will need much more to bring an end to this lasting dry.

This year we were fortunate to host the 75th MDA Conference in the eastern section of the northern Basin at Toowoomba. Delegates were given an insight to the northern Basin through visits to regional areas including Cubbie station which is in the Balonne Shire. A team from the ABC joined delegates on a tour around the station and the workings of the station by Cubbie Ag CEO Paul Brimblecombe.

There has been a change in mayor at Balonne Shire Council with Cr Samantha O’Toole elected. As Balonne Shire is the chair of Region 12 Cr O’Toole will take over as chair of the region. I wish her all the very best in her new position and look forward to seeing our region grow from strength to strength under her guidance.

I thank you all for your support and friendship during my time as Chair of Region 12 and wish you all a safe, productive and wet 20-21 year.



Mayor Richard Marsh  
Outgoing Chair, Region 12.



Mayor Samantha O’Toole  
Chair, Region 12.



Delegates to the 75th National Conference on tour at the West Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba.



# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

70

local council members across the Basin

MDA participated in  
10

Basin-related forums



4

years working to implement Strategic Plan 2016-19

27

region meetings held this year

142

Delegates attended the 75th National Conference & AGM

85

Average number of participants represented at inter-regional meetings

72%

of our members represented at our annual conference each year

86%

of motions became the basis of MDA priorities, policies or position statements

3

inter-regional meetings held

9

The number of months in this annual report due to a change in financial year

3.8

FTE staff at the MDA

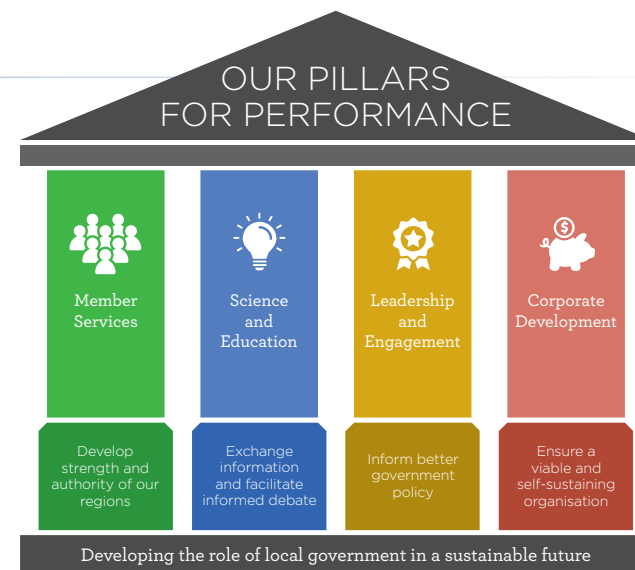
# OUR PERFORMANCE

## MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS JULY 2019 - MARCH 2020

The following table is a snapshot of the meetings at which our members' interests were promoted by the MDA Executive leadership.

| Month          | Name   |
|----------------|--|
| July 2019      | <b>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</b><br>Federal Minister for the Environment   |
|                | <b>Joanna Hewitt AO</b><br>A/Chair<br>Phillip Glyde<br>Chief Executive Officer<br>Murray Darling Basin Authority   |
|                | <b>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</b><br>Deputy Prime Minister<br>Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development  |
| August 2019    | <b>Presented at SEGRA Conference in Barooga</b><br>Managing Environmental Change in the Murray Darling Basin   |
|                | <b>Dr Susan Close MP</b><br>SA Shadow Minister for Education, Environment and Water<br>State Member for Port Adelaide  |
| September 2019 | <b>The Hon David Spiers MP</b><br>SA Minister for Environment and Water<br>Member for Black  |
|                | <b>Mr Tony Pasin MP</b><br>Federal Member for Barker   |
| November 2019  | <b>Dr Jacki Schirmer Associate Professor</b><br>University of Canberra<br>Social impact assessment, human wellbeing, and natural resource management                         |
|                | <b>Mr Philip Alcorn</b><br>Advisor to The Hon David Littleproud<br>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management<br>Deputy Leader of the Federal National Party |

| Month                             | Name  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| November 2019<br><i>continued</i> | <b>The Hon Bob Katter MP</b><br>Member for Kennedy  |
|                                   | <b>The Hon Melinda Pavey MP</b><br>NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing<br>Member for Oxley   |
|                                   | <b>Mr Mick Keelty</b><br>Interim Inspector-General  |
| February 2020                     | <b>Mr Adam O'Bied</b><br>Advisor<br>The Hon. Mr Anthony Lynham<br>Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy<br>Queensland Parliament |
|                                   | <b>National Indigenous Australian Agency</b><br>Executive Staff<br>Shepparton Branch  |
|                                   | <b>Senator Perin Davey</b><br>Senator for New South Wales   |
|                                   | <b>The Hon Mark Coulton MP</b><br>Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communication and Local Government                                 |
|                                   | <b>Mr Brendan McRandle</b><br>Chief Executive Officer<br>National Water Grid Authority  |
|                                   | <b>Mr Tony Mahar</b><br>Chief Executive Officer<br>National Farmers Federation  |



The respective Chairs and CEOs of the Murray Darling Basin Authority and Murray Darling Association met in Shepparton to extend the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding, and extend the agreement for a further 5 years.



Left to Right: Phillip Glyde, Joanna Hewitt, Cr David Thurley, and Emma Bradbury. Shepparton July 2019.

# OUR PERFORMANCE CONTINUED

A brief sample of our representative engagements and events

## MEMBER SERVICES

- ▶ **MDA 75th National Conference** and AGM held in Toowoomba
- ▶ **Represented** Basin communities in the roundtable consultation on the Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions in the Basin in Shepparton October 2019
- ▶ **Wrote** to all Basin governments to urge all to set aside any disunity and stay the course, to work together to ensure the integrity of the Basin Plan remains uncompromised and that its implementation is adaptive and timely, delivering a healthy working Basin for all
- ▶ **Facilitated** region and inter-regional meetings, including Region 6 symposium and stakeholder workshop
- ▶ **Prepared** significant submissions on behalf of member councils, including submissions to the Socio-Economic Panel and the ACCC
- ▶ **Represented** the MDA on the water panel at the NSW Farmers conference, where Region 4 Chair Cr MacAllister spoke about key Basin and water issues, the role of local government in recovery and resilience, and learnings from Region 4.

## SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

- ▶ **Awarded** 2019 Bursary to Stirling East Primary School students for their dedication to studying the health and management of the Murray Darling Basin, demonstrating the value of incorporating water into the national curriculum.
- ▶ **Facilitated** the second Connecting catchments and communities workshop in Euston 30 July 2019

- ▶ **Facilitated** a panel session on drought and water security at the LGNSW Water Management Conference
- ▶ **Met** with National Farmers Federation President Fiona Simson and CEO Tony Mahar regularly to discuss knowledge-sharing and collaboration
- ▶ **Presented** at the Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia annual conference in Barooga
- ▶ **Continued** the Basin Bulletin newsletter, following on from the River Lander notes.

## LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ **Met** with South Australian Minister The Hon. David Speirs member for Black – Minister for Environment and Water at SA Parliament House
- ▶ **Discussion** with Interim Inspector-General Mick Keely about his inquiry into various aspects of state and federal water sharing
- ▶ **Met** with the Hon Minister Michael McCormack Deputy Prime Minister in Wagga
- ▶ **Met** with NSW Water Minister The Hon. Melinda Pavey and discussed motions from the MDA's 2019 National Conference including Motion 20, the merits and feasibility of a water river diversion scheme
- ▶ **Met** with representatives from the Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- ▶ **Met** with the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment to discuss management of inflows from recent rain events and community response, the importance of NSW completing its water resource plans, national water infrastructure grid and the new organisational chart for the department

- ▶ **Met** with The Hon Minister Keith Pitt, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia and discussed water resource plans, economic diversification, connecting communities and catchments and invited to attend BCLP
- ▶ **Met** with The Hon Minister Mark Coulton MP, Federal Minister for Local Government
- ▶ **Introduction** with Senator Pat Dodson and invited First Nations involvement in leadership program

## CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ **Hosted** 5th annual MDA Strategic Planning Workshop in Moama
- ▶ **Met** with Nicole Emara CSIRO and discussed collaboration on the development of Australia's national outlook: Murray-Darling Basin and progression of relationship agreement
- ▶ **Facilitated** a roundtable discussion with CEWO and MDBA to progress options for a collaborative action plan, December 2019
- ▶ **Implemented** a CRM to better communicate with our membership base and stakeholders
- ▶ **Continued** the MDA Strategic advisory group
- ▶ **Developed** Basin communities Leadership Program
- ▶ **Strengthened** existing relationships with agency and research partners, including the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and CSIRO.





# KEY REPORTS IN THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

This year saw government initiate four key inquiries into the Murray-Darling Basin all directly reflecting calls made by Basin communities and reflected in the resolutions by the MDA. These reports follow the release in January 2019 of the Australian Government Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Five-year assessment. MDA contributed actively. Ensuring local government is strongly represented amid our state and federal counterparts, playing a vital role in informing the decisions, policies and reviews that impact our local communities.

## **Inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin**

- ▶ Australian Competition & Consumer Commission Inquiry
- ▶ August 2019 the Federal Government announced that it would direct the ACCC to conduct an inquiry into markets for tradeable water rights in the Murray-Darling Basin.
- ▶ The MDA made submission to the ACCC inquiry, reflecting resolution of the members at the 2019 AGM.

## **Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions in the Basin**

- ▶ June 2019, a panel Chaired by Rob Sefton was appointed to assess the social and economic conditions affecting communities in the Murray-Darling Basin. The appointment of the panel followed years of advocacy by the MDA for Basin governments to better understand the drivers of change and impacts of changing water availability on Basin communities. The MDA contributed heavily to this assessment, reviewing the terms of reference and assessment framework and participating in community consultation across multiple locations in preparation for a detailed written submission.

## **Impact of lower inflows on state shares under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement – Interim Inspector-General's Report**

- ▶ October 2019 saw Mick Keelty AO was appointed the Interim Inspector- General, and tasked with an inquiry into the *Impact of lower inflows on state shares under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement*
- ▶ during the past year, the Interim Inspector General held a series of drop-in sessions to listen to the concerns of Basin communities. MDA representatives attended several of these sessions, including in Deniliquin and Shepparton
- ▶ following community consultation, the *Impact of lower inflows on state shares under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement* report was provided to Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, the Hon Keith Pitt MP, on 30 March 2020.

## **Lower Lakes Science Review**

- ▶ In December 2019, it was announced the science of South Australia's Lower Lakes will be reviewed by an independent team led by Australia's lead science agency CSIRO and assisted by the MDBA's advisory committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences.

# OUTCOMES FROM OUR RESOLUTIONS

The purpose of the Murray Darling Association is to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating discussion and seeking to inform government policy. The following table tracks the relationship between the issues resolved by the MDA and changes to related government policy and practice.

| INFLUENCE  | GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DECISIONS   |
|--|--|
| <b>2019 Motion 5.1</b>   |  |
| <p>That the Constitution of the Murray Darling Association be amended at i) Part 35 (b) such that the financial year of the MDA commences on 1 April and ends on the following 31 March, and ii) Part 6 , s17 (3) such that that the annual general meeting of the MDA must be held between 1 April and 30 September in a particular year.</p>   | <p>The MDA's financial reporting year was changed from 1 July – 30 June to 1 April – 31 March, enabling the MDA to better balance the annual reporting and conference season.</p>  |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.2</b>   |  |
| <p>That the MDA calls on Basin Governments to endorse the Menindee Lakes, or a portion of the Lake system to be listed as a Ramsar site, in further consultation with the community.</p>   | <p>The Menindee lakes system is an essential part of the Murray-Darling Basin contributing to the health of flora and fauna right throughout the Basin. The MDA is continuing consultation with other stakeholders including an increasing number of councils resolving similar motions.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.3</b>   |  |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association support the call on the NSW Government and Murray-Darling Basin Authority, to ensure that</p> <p>a) the NSW Water Sharing Plans and Resource Management Plans for the Barwon-Darling, Murray-Lower Darling and Northern Basin Rivers must include minimum river flow and storage levels that will protect the health of the Barwon-Darling and Lower Darling River from the Queensland border to the Murray River.</p> <p>b) Minimum flows at sites along the Barwon-Darling and Lower Darling River, in particular at Wilcannia, and water storage volumes in the Menindee Lakes must be reached before extraction of water for irrigation is allowed.</p> | <p>Water resource plans are an integral part of implementing the Basin Plan. They set new rules on how much water can be taken from the system, ensuring the sustainable diversion limit is not exceeded over time.</p> <p>A growing chorus of community and agencies across the Basin recognise the imperatives of a complete suite of accredited Water Resource Plans including those across NSW which have not been yet been submitted according the deadline required under legislation.</p> <p>The MDA had written to and met with the NSW government, Basin Officials, the MDBA and Basin Ministers urging all support and encouragement required for NSW to meet this obligation.</p> <p>NSW has yet to submit for accreditation 11 of its 22 Water Resource Plans.</p> |

# OUTCOMES FROM OUR RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

| INFLUENCE   | GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DECISIONS  |
|---|---|
| <b>2019 Motion 5.4</b>  |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association calls on the Federal Government to provide ongoing assistance for drought preparedness in the form of low interest innovation, water infrastructure and drought assistance loans, training and professional development in business management for farmers and continued support for Rural Financial counsellors to work with farmers long term, with the understanding that drought is part of the normal cycle of farming and needs to be planned for.</p>       | <p>The recent drought has taken a toll on communities across the entire Basin. The MDA has conducted meetings the Department of Infrastructure and the National Water Grid Authority in Canberra. The MDA advocated at those meetings the need for greater communication regarding how those two organisations plan for current and future drought cycles.</p> <p>The MDA has written to and met with the National Water Infrastructure Authority, and with the National Farmers Federation to explore strategies for local government to assist in drought preparedness.</p> |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.5</b>  |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association call on the Federal and State Government to address the urgent need for action on the Darling Barwon river system to ensure that the supply of safe drinking water and flows for stock and domestic use is the priority at all times, including priority over and above the release of water from dams for large scale irrigation, irrespective of the circumstances in which allocations have been pre-purchased or pre-allocated for large scale irrigation.</p> | <p>Critical human water needs are the top priority under the Water Act 2007 followed closely followed by stock and domestic supply.</p> <p>The MDA also participated in stakeholder consultation with the NSW Government in the development of its Flood Plain Harvesting and Regulation.</p> <p>The MDA had written to and met with the NSW government, Basin Officials, the MDBA and Basin Ministers urging all support and encouragement required for NSW to meet this obligation.</p> <p>NSW has yet to complete its Flood Plain Harvesting Policy.</p>                   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.6</b>  |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association calls on the Federal and State Governments to immediately and proactively heed the Productivity Commission's recommendation for better governance and integrated delivery of the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism Projects as well as more realistic timeframes for delivery of those Projects.</p>  | <p>The MDA had written to and met with the Basin Officials, the MDBA and Basin Ministers urging all Basin governments to adopt and report on the implementation of recommendations of the Productivity Commission.</p> <p>NSW has yet to complete its Flood Plain Harvesting Policy.</p>  |



# OUTCOMES FROM OUR RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

| INFLUENCE  | GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DECISIONS   |
|--|--|
| <b>2019 Motion 5.7</b>   |  |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association calls on Federal and State governments to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) recognise, value, protect and honour the significant investment by taxpayers over many decades to establish irrigation schemes to feed the nation, and</li> <li>ii) immediately place a moratorium on the development or opening of new irrigation farms downstream of long-established irrigation areas until the Basin Plan objectives are fully met and the full implications (environmental, economic and social) of the further geographic distribution of water entitlements is properly researched and understood.</li> <li>iii) ensure that existing irrigation schemes are optimally utilised and are not subject to ongoing exacerbating swiss cheese effect through poor and / or silo-ed policy decisions and ineffectual land use planning that fails to consider implications for the Basin Plan.</li> <li>iv) engage meaningfully with and have genuine regard to the findings of the ACCC Inquiry into water trading that is underway, and</li> </ul> | <p>Basin Governments have invested significant resources in commissioning the ACCC, IIG and Social and Economic Impacts reports as well as the Lower Lakes Science Review. The MDA has advocated through communications briefings and various submissions that the Basin governments must implement the recommendations of these reports or risk significant waste of resources and loss of community support.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.8</b>   |  |
| <p>That the MDA calls on Basin governments to extend the 2019 deadline for approval of such Water Resource Plans where there are complex changes required and there are material risks to the quality of the plans.</p>  | <p>MDA has written to Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communication and Local Government, NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing calling for New South Wales to complete their Water Resource Plans.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.10</b>  |  |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.11</b>  |  |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.12</b>  |  |
| <p>That the MDA advocate for increased State and Federal government investment in research that articulates the impact of nutrient load in the Murray Darling Basin as a result of current and forecast increased fertiliser and herbicide usage from agriculture in the run-off zone, reports on findings, and identifies alternatives that will reduce nutrient loads.</p>   | <p>It is critical to have science agencies involved in research and consultation within the Basin. The MDA had written to and met with the Basin Officials, the MDBA, the Office of the Interim Inspector General, CSIRO and various science groups and agencies urging a single source of trusted science via our national science agency.</p> <p>The MDA is currently exploring project collaboration opportunities with the CSIRO on soil carbon sequestration.</p> |

# OUTCOMES FROM OUR RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

| INFLUENCE   | GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DECISIONS  |
|---|---|
| <b>2019 Motion 5.13</b>   |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association call on Australia's Government and the National Farmers Federation to ensure that the agricultural productivity target is to be supported by a research program to develop innovative strategies for achieving the target in a water constrained future, including via the use of alternative water sources.</p>   | <p>The MDA had written to and met with National Farmers Federation in Canberra, and with the National Water Infrastructure Authority to encourage alignment between our water and productivity plans and our national priorities.</p> <p>The MDA continues to promote stronger alignment of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, the 2030 Agriculture Plan, our National Water Infrastructure Investment Strategy and our national energy plans to ensure they are operating consistently, and are not conflicting at the expense of our Basin communities.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.14</b>   |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association engage with the Federal Government on how it intends to facilitate population growth whilst maximizing socio-economic benefits for regional communities and mitigating risks to the health of the Murray-Darling Basin system.</p>   | <p>Many Basin communities are facing changing social and economic conditions. The MDA made a submission to the Socio-Economic Impacts Assessment Panel speaking to this change. The MDA also has a relationship with Regional Development Australia which explores ways to develop Basin Communities.</p> <p>The MDA has no current data that reflects any specific policy shift on this matter.</p>  |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.15</b>   |   |
| <p>i) That the MDA continues to publicly support the ACCC Investigation<br/>ii) That the MDA calls for the continual move toward transparency of all water trading and water trading mechanisms in the Murray-Darling Basin including the access to water trading information.</p>  | <p>The MDA published a communications brief that can be found on the MDA media page. The MDA also made a submission to the ACCC.</p> <p>The report is not due for release until May 2020.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.16</b>   |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association calls on Federal and State governments to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop a transparent National Water Trading Platform which will serve as a single source of information on water, from recovery targets to allocations, through to sales (whether permanent or temporary)</li> <li>ii. Require routine disclosure statements by larger water holders (such as any person or entity that owns upwards of 2% of available entitlements in an area or any water trading companies), and</li> <li>iii. Require routine disclosure by banks of any debts recovered through forced water sales in irrigation farming areas</li> </ol> | <p>See item above.</p> <p>The MDA has stated publicly that Until we get a clear and defined picture of how the water market works, any confidence in it will be compromised. The MDA is continuing to call for one set of rules for everyone, and for water market products, principles and rules to be synthesised and simplified to reflect regional requirements. Water markets must have consistent and reliable application across all states.</p> <p>We are also calling for a single source of accessible information to support informed decision making by farmers, irrigators and all water market participants. The MDA continues to publicly support the ACCC Investigation into the operation of water markets in the hope that this enquiry will achieve greater clarity for market participants.</p> |

# OUTCOMES FROM OUR RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

| INFLUENCE   | GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE DECISIONS  |
|---|---|
| <b>2019 Motion 5.17</b>   |   |
| <p>THAT the MDA request from the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and the MDBA a complete accounting of all water storages, including open channels, diversions and on-farm storages holding unmetred water in temporary storages, for public release.</p>  | <p>The MDA sees the need for accountability and transparency in the basin.<br/>The MDA made this need clear in its submission to the ACCC as well as the Basin Social and Economic Impacts Panel.<br/>The Interim Inspector General's report also identified the need for greater transparency.</p>   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.18</b>   |   |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.19</b>   |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association calls on the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Water Minister, to recognise concerns from Indigenous groups, traditional owners and custodians that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) they are unable to continue cultural practices, due to lack of cultural flows;</li> <li>b) there is an increased financial impost on high Indigenous population towns for drinking water, where same is unavailable, or of poor quality;</li> <li>c) a lack of genuine, integrated and informed consultation has been the norm in matters of water management and projects which directly affect native title holders, traditional custodians and Land Council groups and individuals, combined with lack of feedback or Minutes from meetings with Government representatives and agencies; and</li> <li>d) local First Nations people hold knowledge from greater timelines than current records about flows, floods, movement and interplay of the entire riverine ecology, yet there is a resistance to engaging with that knowledge, utilising the skills and management practices used for many centuries (45,000 years in our region), despite clear desire from most groups to assist and play a more active role in water and land management.</li> </ul> | <p>The need for consultation with first Nation regarding a resource of which they have managed for thousands of years is glaring, as is the need for cultural flows.<br/>The MDA has continues to meet with First Nation leaders and associations and actively supports advocacy in this area undertaken by Indigenous Peak Bodies.<br/>The Socio-Economic Assessment Report draft emphasized the importance of such groups, a recommendation the MDA agreed with this report..</p> |
| <b>2019 Motion 5.20</b>   |   |
| <p>That the Murray Darling Association call on the National Water Infrastructure Grid Taskforce to inquire into the merits and feasibility of a water river diversion scheme to enhance the sustainability of the Murray Darling Basin.</p>   | <p>The MDA has written to and met with the leadership of the National Water Infrastructure Authority seeking further information on the merits and feasibility of a water river diversion scheme to enhance the sustainability of the Murray Darling Basin.<br/>The MDA has no current data that reflects any specific policy shift on this matter.</p>   |



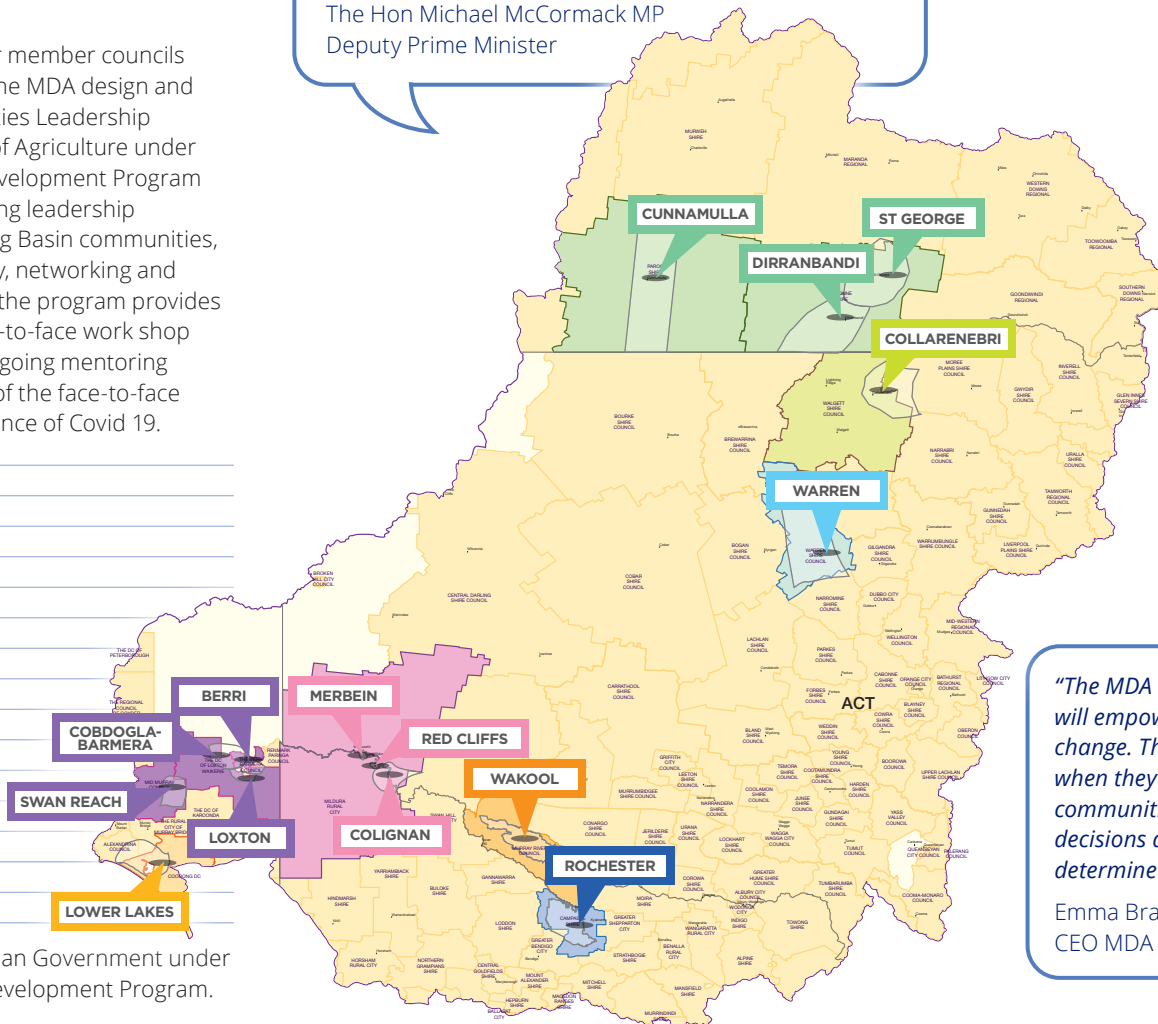
# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: BASIN COMMUNITIES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Basin communities are in an unprecedented era of change, with ongoing drought, complex water reform, inquiries and a changing economic landscape.

To support Basin communities and our member councils to navigate this change, this year saw the MDA design and develop the inaugural Basin Communities Leadership Program. Funded by the Department of Agriculture under the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program this exciting initiative focuses on building leadership capacity throughout the Murray-Darling Basin communities, enhanced by elements of water literacy, networking and engagement. Delivered in three parts, the program provides each group with online learning, a face-to-face work shop delivered in community followed by ongoing mentoring and project development. The launch of the face-to-face workshops was delayed by the emergence of Covid 19.

## BCLP locations

- Lower Lakes
- Loxton
- Cobdogla-Barmera and Berri
- Swan Reach
- Merbein
- Red Cliffs
- Colignan
- Cunnamulla
- Dirranbandi
- St George
- Collarenebri
- Warren
- Wakool
- Rochester



*"We look forward to those young leaders of tomorrow emerging putting their hands up and saying I want to work in this space, I want to make sure my community gets its fair share and making sure they identify the problems but also have the solutions."*

The Hon Michael McCormack MP  
Deputy Prime Minister

*"The MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program will empower communities to make transformative change. This can only occur within communities when they have strong leadership - this enables communities to join the conversation, make informed decisions and create a vision and framework to determine the success of their own future."*

Emma Bradbury  
CEO MDA

- 

**Be a powerful voice.**  
Be part of a collective voice advocating for councils and communities in the Basin.
- 

**Inform better decision making.**  
Ensure your expertise and knowledge plays a part in the decisions affecting you.
- 

**Ensure your voice is heard.**  
Inform policy at regional, state and federal level.
- 

**Shape the future.**  
Be a part of creating the future we want for our Basin communities.
- 

**Support regional networks.**  
To achieve local solutions.

This project was funded by the Australian Government under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

# EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING: CUBBIE STATION TOUR

Each year, our national conference explores some of the most prominent and often controversial Basin issues through its dynamic conference program and a regional study tour.

This year, the MDA's 75th National Conference & Study Tour was followed by an invited tour of Australia's largest cotton farm, Cubbie Station. Cubbie Station covers approximately 80,000 hectares, with 19,153 hectares of irrigation area.

Providing councils from across the Basin with an exclusive opportunity to see first hand the operation of this iconic farming enterprise, Cubbie Station Chief Executive Officer Paul Brimblecombe hosted a fully guided full day tour of the enterprise.

In 2019, Cubbie Station announced their commitment to voluntarily handover up to 10 gigalitres of water, back to environmental flows and downstream users, after dry periods.



Above: An empty water storage and dry pumps on Cubbie Station.  
Right: Balonne Mayor Richard Marsh, Emma Bradbury and Cr Sam O'Toole.  
Far right: Viewing the vast storage dams.



Paul Brimblecombe, CEO Cubbie Station

Cubbie Station also plays an important economic role in the region and employs 50 full time employees with the farming operation, 12 full time employees with the ginnery, up to 120 casual / seasonal employees at both the farm and the ginnery in full production years.

At the time of the tour there was no water held in any of the properties 460 gigalitres worth of water storages.



Click here to view the ABC report online

*The tour of Cubbie Station after the 2019 MDA Conference in Toowoomba really highlighted to me the need for us all to be educated on the facts about the Basin Plan. Before the tour, I thought "here was a property that was bursting at the seams with cotton and flooded with water that was forced onto the station from a weir that blocked precious water from reaching the Darling river." It had to be true, I'd seen it on Facebook myself.*

*However, a tour of the property and an open and frank discussion with Paul Brimblecombe, Cubbie CEO, quickly changed my mind. While the property is a huge consumer of water, it is subject to rules and regulations like anybody else. It made me realise that as members of the MDA we need to gain as much knowledge as we can about the Basin, its diverse communities, and how the Murray-Darling Basin Plan operates.*

*That is why next year we will be having a virtual tour of the Barmah Choke and the delivery issues that are causing so much damage to the Goulburn River. Once we have educated ourselves then we can make informed decisions about our support for the future of the Basin.*

*Cr Dennis Patterson  
Region 2 Chair*





# ANNUAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

MDA conducts strategic planning workshops annually to ensure our strategic priorities continue to reflect the needs and objectives of our members.

This year saw completion of the successful implementation of our strategic plan 2016-19, and finalisation of almost 2 years of extensive consultation and preparation of our Vision 2025.

We thank all our members who were incredibly generous in providing their time and input to inform the new strategic plan.

This year, more than 30 community leaders from across the Murray Darling Basin attended the 6th annual Murray Darling Association Strategic Planning workshop.

The two-day event saw a gathering of mayors, councillors and senior executives of councils from Albury to Adelaide, Menindee to the Murray Mouth, as far afield as Balonne, Federation, Barunga West and more.

Councils discussed a range of issues, including the importance of place-based change and adaptation for local government, the role of science in dealing with big Basin issues, and how the MDA can work with local government to identify and achieve the future they want – not the future they want back.

Day one of the workshop included presentations from and engagement with the CSIRO and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, while day two focussed on internal organisational development and planning.

The workshop was an opportunity to discuss not only some of the challenges we are facing at the moment as local government within the Basin, but also the many opportunities that are before us, particularly if we work together and show strength in diversity and unity.



Top: Strategic planning workshop 2020, Moama

Above: from left to right: Gavin Rees CSIRO, Emma Bradbury, Dr Neil Lazarow, Research Leader of Basin Management Outcomes CSIRO, Nicole Emaru Business Development Manager, Water Program CSIRO; Matt Magin, CEO Balonne Shire Council and Mayor Paul Simmons Coorong District Council. Strategic planning workshop, Moama.





Ancient indigenous fish traps on the Barwon River at Brewarrina. Picture courtesy: Mike Bowers – Guardian Australia

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS

The MDA has continued to work partnering local government and communities with our valued partners and stakeholders. These partnerships are essential to deliver strong outcomes for our communities and build future focused collaboration opportunities for our members.

We value the partnerships we have established across the Basin that are essential to the effective performance of our organisation and the achievement of our goals:

| OUR PARTNERS  | OUR INTENT   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basin LGAs including regional and state local government organisations</li> </ul>  | Collaborate effectively and respectfully to maximise efficiencies for local government and their peak agencies by avoiding duplication and providing multi-jurisdictional perspectives.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Basin Governments</li> <li>▶ Murray Darling Basin Authority</li> <li>▶ National Water Grid Authority</li> <li>▶ Climate Change Authority</li> <li>▶ Australian Energy Market Authority</li> <li>▶ Commonwealth Environmental Water Office</li> </ul> | Fairly and frankly represent the interests and priorities of local government at the Basin scale on positions of common interest. Collaborate and exchange information and advice to improve knowledge and awareness of Basin issues, and of the impacts of policy and decisions to create better outcomes for local government and communities. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ State and national peak bodies and other agencies</li> </ul>   | Consult and work with State and national peak bodies and other agencies to foster a stronger relationship to local government of sector-specific perspectives and issues.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ First Nations organisations</li> </ul>   | That we learn from, respect and treasure the natural resource management practices of First Nations custodians.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Regional Development Australia</li> </ul>  | Work together to maximise benefits and value for all, and progress the relationship ensuring that our roles are clear and our collaboration adds value to the work we do. Through our partnership we aim to avoid unnecessary duplication.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Universities</li> </ul>  | Partner with universities to enhance water literacy, and provide practical application of academic research for the benefit of local government and community.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ CSIRO</li> </ul>   | Establish a framework under which we will collaborate on research projects to conduct research, development and related activities to overcome the key challenges of resource management in the Murray Darling Basin and turn them to the Basin community's unique advantage.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Media</li> </ul>   | Promote the interests and achievements of our Basin communities through the media.   |



# COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

| MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASES 1ST JULY 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020 |   |
|---|---|
| Date  | Title   |
| 17 March 2020   | Council gather to discuss the case for place-based change and adaptation for communities.                 |
| 3 March 2020  | Local Communities' welcome progress on Water Resource Plans.  |
| 14 February 2020  | Local government expresses concern over NSW Floodplain Harvesting decision.                               |
| 6 February 2020   | Applications for MDA's Basin Communities Leadership Program are now open!                                 |
| 7 January 2020  | 2020 Bushfire Information for Murray Darling Basin communities  |
| 26 November 2019  | Local government tackles the big issues at the 75th Annual Conference.                                    |
| 14 October 2019   | Stirling East Primary School students to address national event.  |
| 9 October 2019  | Local government to hear latest Basin Plan updates at MDA National Conference.                            |
| 8 October 2019  | MDA Motions Announced.  |
| 1 October 2019  | Local government to discuss Inland Rail at MDA National Conference.                                       |
| 16 September 2019   | MDA releases Position Statement on Water Market Conduct and Reform  |
| 10 September 2019   | MDA announces additional Cubbie Station tour as part of 75th National Conference.                         |
| 10 September 2019   | MDA appoints strong new leadership team for year ahead.   |
| 5 September 2019  | Local government to deliberate key basin challenges and opportunities at 75th nation Conference.          |
| 22 August 2019  | Beginning the conversation – MDA Editorial and Advertisement LG Focus                                     |
| 12 August 2019  | MDA welcomes Inspector-General and continued support of Basin Plan at COAG                                |
| 1 August 2019   | Connecting Catchments and Communities – Constraints: Tension between demand and deliverability key topic. |
| 1 August 2019   | The Barwon-Darling is an ecosystem in crisis.   |
| 9 July 2019   | MDA response to 4Corners Cash Splash.   |

**Number of followers on the Murray Darling Association's social media pages:**

- Twitter: 927
- Facebook: 572

**Number of posts/tweets published between 1/7/19 – 31/3/20:**

- Twitter: 175
- Facebook: 80

**Number of users: 6,400**

**Number of page views: 26,635**

**Number of sessions: 9,900**

**www.mda.asn.au**

**BASIN BULLETIN e-newsletter**

| Issue    | Month          |
|----------|----------------|
| Issue 24 | July 2019      |
| Issue 25 | August 2019    |
| Issue 26 | September 2019 |
| Issue 27 | October 2019   |
| Issue 28 | November 2019  |
| Issue 29 | December 2019  |
| Issue 30 | January 2020   |
| Issue 31 | February 2020  |
| Issue 32 | March 2020     |

# OUR PEOPLE



**Emma Bradbury** B. Soc. Sci, Grad Dip Ed, GAICD  
Chief Executive Officer

Emma has almost 30 years' experience in business management, education, governance and strategic development. This includes roles as CEO, Managing Director, Principal, and Councillor. Her 7 years with the MDA representing local government and communities across 4 states in an area of complex policy reform is seeing Emma's expertise in strategic planning and implementation building confidence, stability, and continuing to deliver on mission for the councils and communities of the Murray Darling Basin



**James Marshall**  
Policy Officer

James joined the Murray Darling Association staff in March of 2019. James currently works three days a week as he is also a full-time student studying a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) at Latrobe University. James has a background in agricultural industries and a keen interest in agri-economics.



**Cathy Keegan**  
Membership Services Officer

Over the last 9 months with the MDA, Cathy's learning and understanding of the Basin footprints issues have been immense.

She acknowledges the incredible support from her CEO and her fellow team colleagues who are a pleasure to work with as they are all amazingly competent and professional.

Cathy would also like to thank each region chair, over the 9 months, plus their incredible secretariats who manage their regions so effectively. It has been a real highlight to get to know each chair and secretariat.



**Jess Maher**  
Communications and Engagement Officer

With a background in communications for social change and not-for-profit organisations, Jess joined the Murray Darling Association in June 2019.

Since joining the organisation, Jess has enjoyed meeting the MDA's region chairs and delegates at various events throughout the year including the MDA's 75th National Conference in Toowoomba and the MDA Annual Strategic meeting in Moama and, through these meetings, learning about the Basin's complex issues and many opportunities first-hand.



**Georgia Andrew-Mills**  
Business and Training Support Officer

Georgia commenced employment with the MDA in March 2020.

Georgia is employed on a full-time basis as the Business and Training Support Officer for the Basin Community Leadership Program.

Georgia recently completed a traineeship with the Country Fire Authority based in district 20, Kerang. She has completed a Certificate 3 in Business and hopes to build on her skill sets and is looking forward to the commencement of the BCLP training workshops.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019-20

## Working With Our Clients, Not Simply For Them



Experienced accountant Peter George of M+S Group was appointed the Murray Darling Association's first skills-based treasurer in 2017, marking a new era in financial administration for the organisation.

Mr George's appointment to the MDA Board as a skills-based treasurer is allowed under Part 4 s8(3) of the 2016 Constitution, and sees the association's continuing commitment to sound governance, with the composition of the board viewed as a strategic asset to the association.

Peter is Senior Accountant and Partner of M+S Group Accounting Pty Ltd, the largest accounting firm in rural Victoria.

The MDA gratefully acknowledges the contribution of Peter George and M&S Group Accounting.



**m+s group**  
accounting



# COMMITTEE'S REPORT

## MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

### COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your Committee members submit the financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc. for the financial period ended 31 March 2020.

### Committee Members

The names of committee members throughout the period and at the date of this report are:

|                      |                    |                                  |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cr David Thurley     | National President | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Cr David Thurley     | Chair Region 1     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Cr Denis Patterson   | Chair Region 2     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Vacant               | Chair Region 3     |                                  |
| Cr Jane MacAllister  | Chair Region 4     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Cr Peter Hunter      | Chair Region 5     | 1 July 2019 - 16 March 2020      |
| Cr Peter Raison      | Chair Region 5     | 16 March 2020 - 31 March 2020    |
| Cr Melissa Rebbeck   | Chair Region 6     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Cr Andrew Tilley     | Chair Region 7     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Mayor Dennis Clark   | Chair Region 8     | 1 July 2019 - 29 November 2019   |
| Cr Brian Lockyer     | Chair Region 8     | 29 November 2019 - 31 March 2020 |
| Cr Paul Maytom       | Chair Region 9     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Mayor Phyllis Miller | Chair Region 10    | 29 August 2019 - 31 March 2020   |
| Cr John Campbell     | Chair Region 11    | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Mayor Richard Marsh  | Chair Region 12    | 1 July 2019 - 28 March 2020      |
| Cr Samantha O'Toole  | Chair Region 12    | 28 March 2020 - 31 March 2020    |
| Emma Bradbury        | Public Officer     | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |
| Peter George         | Treasurer          | 1 July 2019 - 31 March 2020      |

### Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial period were:

To provide effective representation of local government and communities of the Murray Darling Basin at state and federal level in the management of Basin Resources by providing information, facilitating informed debate, and seeking to influence government policy.

### Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the financial period.

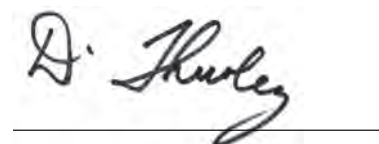
### Operating Result

The surplus / (loss) after providing for income tax for the financial period amounted to \$33,447 - [30 June 2019 (\$9,475)]

### Going Concern

This financial report has been prepared on a going concern basis which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business. The ability of the association to continue to operate as a going concern is dependent upon the ability of the association to generate sufficient cash flows from operations to meet its liabilities. The members of the association believe that the going concern assumption is appropriate.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee on:



David Thurley - National President



Peter George - Treasurer

Dated: 3 July 2020

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

|                                |             | 2020           | 30 June 2019   |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Income</b>                  |             |                |                |
|                                | <b>Note</b> |                |                |
| Conference Income              |             | 98,095         | 98,604         |
| Income - Memberships           | 2           | 236,102        | 213,360        |
| Income - Projects              |             | 66,031         | 2,805          |
| Income From Fundraising Events |             | 889            | 200            |
| Interest Income                | 3           | 103            | 680            |
| Other Income                   | 4           | 196,386        | 74,140         |
| <b>Total Income</b>            |             | <b>597,606</b> | <b>389,789</b> |

|   |             | 2020           | 30 June 2019   |
|---|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Expenditure</b>                                  |             |                |                |
|   | <b>Note</b> |                |                |
| Depreciation  |             |                |                |
| Depreciation - Low Value Pool                       |             | 82             | 175            |
| Depreciation - Motor Vehicle                        |             | 324            | 1,345          |
| Depreciation - Software                             |             | 3,342          | 7,228          |
| Depreciation - Office Equipment                     |             | 1,498          | 1,157          |
| <b>Total Depreciation</b>                           |             | <b>5,247</b>   | <b>9,905</b>   |
| <b>Motor Vehicles</b>                               |             |                |                |
| Motor Vehicle Insurance                             |             | -              | 743            |
| Fuel Expenses                                       |             | -              | 2,618          |
| Motor Vehicle Maintenance                           |             | 182            | 858            |
| Motor Vehicle Registration                          |             | 1,217          | 162            |
| <b>Total Motor Vehicles</b>                         |             | <b>1,399</b>   | <b>4,381</b>   |
| Advertising & Marketing                             |             | 11,501         | 14,839         |
| Bad Debts Expense                                   |             | 7,350          | -              |
| Bank Fees   |             | 707            | 1,039          |
| Borrowing Expenses                                  |             | -              | 499            |
| Business Insurance                                  |             | 1,010          | 976            |
| Computer Expenses                                   |             | 12,182         | 11,673         |
| Conference Expenses                                 |             | 65,322         | 43,168         |
| Engagement and Communiations                        |             | 17,874         | 4,784          |
| General Repairs & Maintenance                       |             | 4,316          | 2,232          |
| Licences and Subscriptions                          |             | 20,511         | 2,604          |
| Project Expenses                                    |             | 16,914         | -              |
| Meeting Expense                                     |             | 423            | 405            |
| Other Payroll Expenses                              | 5           | 31,457         | 12,299         |
| Postage   |             | 3,460          | 1,383          |
| Premises Rent - Echuca                              |             | 15,964         | 14,614         |
| Printing  |             | 1,130          | 425            |
| Professional Fees                                   | 6           | 14,282         | 15,153         |
| Public Liability Insurance                          |             | 1,543          | 700            |
| Staff Amenities                                     |             | 309            | 323            |
| Staff Training Expenses                             |             | 3,212          | 99             |
| Stationery  |             | 1,463          | 1,790          |
| Storage   |             | -              | 860            |
| Superannuation                                      |             | 25,921         | 19,172         |
| Telephone Expenses                                  |             | 3,862          | 6,023          |
| Travel & Accom. Expenses                            |             | 14,677         | 12,915         |
| Uniforms  |             | 32             | -              |
| Wages & Salaries Expenses                           |             | 273,370        | 210,015        |
| Water Expenses                                      |             | 7,995          | 2,829          |
| Work Cover Premiums                                 |             | 729            | 4,159          |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                            |             | <b>564,159</b> | <b>399,264</b> |
| <b>Net Operating Profit / (Loss) For The Period</b> |             | <b>33,447</b>  | <b>(9,475)</b> |

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

|                                       | Notes | 2020           | 30 June 2019   |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                         |       |                |                |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                 |       |                |                |
| Cash on Hand                          | 7     | 437,749        | 53,152         |
| Accounts Receivable and other Debtors | 8     | 8,007          | 23,250         |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>           |       | <b>445,756</b> | <b>76,402</b>  |
| <b>Non-Current Assets</b>             |       |                |                |
| Financial Assets                      | 9     | -              | 289,575        |
| Property, plant and equipment         | 10    | 62,855         | 21,252         |
| Other                                 | 11    | 1,100          | 1,100          |
| <b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>       |       | <b>63,955</b>  | <b>311,927</b> |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                   |       | <b>509,711</b> | <b>388,329</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                    |       |                |                |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>            |       |                |                |
| Accounts payable and other payables   | 12    | 273,569        | 22,305         |
| Provisions                            | 14    | 79,330         | 42,098         |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b>      |       | <b>352,899</b> | <b>64,403</b>  |
| <b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>        |       |                |                |
| <b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>        |       |                |                |
| Borrowings                            | 13    | 1,500          | 1,500          |
| <b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>  |       | <b>1,500</b>   | <b>1,500</b>   |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>              |       | <b>354,399</b> | <b>65,903</b>  |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                     |       | <b>155,312</b> | <b>322,426</b> |
| <b>Member's Funds</b>                 |       |                |                |
| <b>Capital Reserve</b>                |       |                |                |
| Reserves                              |       | -              | 200,561        |
| Retained Earnings                     |       | 155,312        | 121,865        |
| <b>Total Member's Funds</b>           |       | <b>155,312</b> | <b>322,426</b> |

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

|                                   | Retained Earnings<br>\$ | Asset Revaluation Reserve<br>\$ | Total<br>\$      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance at 1 July 2018            | 131,340                 | 121,298                         | 252,638          |
| Comprehensive Income              |                         |                                 |                  |
| Profit (Loss) for the period      | (9,475)                 | -                               | (9,475)          |
| <b>Total Comprehensive Income</b> | <b>(9,475)</b>          | <b>-</b>                        | <b>(9,475)</b>   |
| Other                             |                         |                                 |                  |
| Revaluations                      | -                       | 79,263                          | 79,263           |
| <b>Total Other</b>                | <b>-</b>                | <b>79,263</b>                   | <b>79,263</b>    |
| <b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>    | <b>121,865</b>          | <b>200,561</b>                  | <b>322,426</b>   |
| Balance at 1 July 2019            | 121,865                 | 200,561                         | 322,426          |
| Comprehensive Income              |                         |                                 |                  |
| Profit (Loss) for the period      | 33,447                  | -                               | 33,447           |
| <b>Total Comprehensive Income</b> | <b>33,447</b>           | <b>-</b>                        | <b>33,447</b>    |
| Other                             |                         |                                 |                  |
| Revaluations                      | -                       | (200,561)                       | (200,561)        |
| <b>Total Other</b>                | <b>-</b>                | <b>(200,561)</b>                | <b>(200,561)</b> |
| <b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>   | <b>155,312</b>          | <b>(200,561)</b>                | <b>155,312</b>   |



# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

|   | Notes      | 2020           | 30 June 2019    |
|---|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Cash flows from Operating Activities</b>                     |            |                |                 |
| Other Receipts  |            | 912,043        | 374,454         |
| Interest Received   |            | 103            | 680             |
| Payments to Suppliers and Employees                             |            | (575,023)      | (400,763)       |
| Interest Paid   |            | -              | (499)           |
| <b>Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Operating Activities</b>      | <b>19b</b> | <b>337,123</b> | <b>(26,128)</b> |
| <b>Cash flows from Investing Activities</b>                     |            |                |                 |
| Payments for Property, Plant And Equipment                      |            | 47,474         | 5,815           |
| <b>Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Investing Activities</b>      |            | <b>47,474</b>  | <b>5,815</b>    |
| <b>Cash flows from Financing Activities</b>                     |            |                |                 |
| Borrowing Repayments  |            | -              | (1,501)         |
| <b>Net Cash Provided by (Used In) from Financing Activities</b> |            | <b>-</b>       | <b>(1,501)</b>  |
| <b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>                     |            | <b>384,597</b> | <b>(21,814)</b> |
| <b>Cash on Hand at Beginning of the Financial period</b>        |            | <b>53,152</b>  | <b>74,966</b>   |
| <b>Cash on Hand at End of Financial period</b>                  | <b>19a</b> | <b>437,749</b> | <b>53,152</b>   |

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

## Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010. The Board has determined that the not-for-profit Association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report covers Murray Darling Association Inc. as an individual entity. Murray Darling Association Inc. is a not-for-profit association incorporated in New South Wales under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010.

The financial report has been prepared on a going concern and accruals basis, and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is also the Association's functional currency.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

## Income Tax

No provision for income tax has been raised as the Association is exempt from income tax pursuant to Division 50, section 50-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

## Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Fixed Assets are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all Fixed Assets is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the committee to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of expected net cashflows that will be received from the asset's employment and subsequent disposal. The expected netcash flows have been discounted to present values in determining recoverable amounts.

## Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a diminishing-value basis over the asset's useful life to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period. An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

# NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED

## MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

### Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors

Contractual receivables include accrued interest and other minor receivables. They are recognised at fair value.

### Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the nominal amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus any related on-costs. Both annual leave and long service leave are recognised within the provisions liability.

#### Short-term employee benefits

Provision is made for the association's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages, salaries and sick leave. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled.

The association's obligations for short-term employee benefits such as wages, salaries and sick leave are recognised as a part of current trade and other payables in the statement of financial position.

#### Other long-term employee benefits

Provision is made for employees' long service leave and annual leave entitlements not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Other long-term employee benefits are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on government bonds that have maturity dates that approximate the terms of the obligations. Upon the re-measurement of obligations for other long-term employee benefits, the net change in the obligation is recognised in profit or loss as a part of employee benefits expense.

The association's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current provisions in its statement of financial position, except where the association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period, in which case the obligations are presented as current provisions.

### Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

### Cash on Hand

Cash includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

### Revenue and Other Income

Membership, Grants, Project, Activities & Interest revenue are recognised when received.

Donations and bequests are recognised in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1004 Contributions, which occurs when all of the following three conditions are satisfied:

- (a) the entity gains control of the contribution or the right to receive the contribution; and
- (b) it is probable that the economic benefits comprising the contribution will flow to the entity; and
- (c) the amount of the contribution can be measured reliably.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

### Murray Darling Foundation

The Murray Darling Foundation was established by the Murray Darling Association Inc. as a "Gift Fund" to receive tax deductible donations. The principal activity of the Foundation is to support the objectives of the Murray Darling Association Inc. The Foundation may receive gifts of money or property which are eligible tax deductible donations under item 6.1.1 of sub-section 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The Foundation is not currently operational. The Board resolved to suspend its activities pending a review of its purpose and the formation of a new committee.

### Leases

Leases of PPE, where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset (but not the legal ownership) are transferred to the association, are classified as finance leases.

Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for that period.

Leased assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of their estimated useful lives or the lease term. Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

# NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED

## MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

### Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

### Financial Assets

Investments in financial assets are initially recognised at cost, which includes transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value, which is equivalent to their market bid price at the end of the reporting period. Movements in fair value are recognised through an equity reserve.

### Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Contractual payables arise when the association becomes obliged to make future payments in respect of the purchase of goods and services. They are initially recognised at fair value, and then subsequently carried at amortised cost.

### Change of Reporting Period

Murray Darling Association Incorporated has elected to change its annual reporting date from 30 June to 31 March. This being the first year of change the financial reports to 31 March contain 9 months of financial information. Previous years and comparative figures contain 12 months of financial information. The decision was approved at the last Annual General Meeting. The intent of this decision is to allow the Annual General Meeting to be held earlier in the year and avoid the congested second half of the year.

|   | 2020    | 30 June 2019 |
|---|---------|--------------|
| <b>2. Memberships</b>                           |         |              |
| Memberships                                     | 236,102 | 213,360      |
| <b>3. Interest Income</b>                       |         |              |
| Interest Received                               | 103     | 680          |
| <b>4. Other Income</b>                          |         |              |
| Sundry Income                                   | 2,450   | -            |
| Profit on Sale of Assets                        | -       | 2,925        |
| Water Sales - Temporary                         | -       | 23,618       |
| Water Sales - Permanent                         | 193,936 | 47,597       |
|   | 196,386 | 74,140       |
| <b>5. Employee Entitlements</b>                 |         |              |
| Annual Leave                                    | 31,457  | 12,299       |
| <b>6. Professional Fees</b>                     |         |              |
| Consulting Fees                                 | 7,500   | 2,271        |
| Audit Fees                                      | 6,782   | 12,882       |
|   | 14,282  | 15,153       |
| <b>7. Cash on Hand</b>                          |         |              |
| Cash At Bank                                    | 437,749 | 53,152       |
|   | 437,749 | 53,152       |
| <b>8. Accounts Receivable and other Debtors</b> |         |              |
| Trade Debtors                                   | 8,395   | 2,066        |
| Less Provision for Doubtful Debts               | (7,350) | -            |
| Sundry Debtor                                   | -       | 15,500       |
| Goods and Services Tax                          | 6,962   | 5,684        |
|   | 8,007   | 23,250       |
| <b>9. Financial Assets</b>                      |         |              |
| Available for sale assets                       | -       | 289,575      |
|   | -       | 289,575      |
| (a) Available for sale financial assets:        |         |              |
| Investments:                                    |         |              |
| High Security Water Shares                      | -       | 289,575      |
|   | -       | 289,575      |



# NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

|  | 2020     | 30 June 2019 |
|--|----------|--------------|
| <b>10. Property, Plant and Equipment</b>       |          |              |
| Motor Vehicles                                 | 40,593   | -            |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation                  | (324)    | -            |
|  | 40,269   | -            |
| Office Furniture, Equipment and Computers      | 15,793   | 8,913        |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation                  | (6,195)  | (4,073)      |
|  | 9,598    | 4,840        |
| Low Value Pool                                 | 1,761    | 1,761        |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation                  | (1,551)  | (1,469)      |
|  | 210      | 292          |
| Software                                       | 23,300   | 23,300       |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation                  | (15,522) | (12,180)     |
|  | 7,778    | 11,120       |
| Artwork  | 5,000    | 5,000        |
| Total Property, Plant and Equipment            | 62,855   | 21,252       |
| <b>11. Other Non-Current Assets</b>            |          |              |
| Bond Paid - Office                             | 1,100    | 1,100        |
|  | 1,100    | 1,100        |
| <b>12. Accounts Payable and Other Payables</b> |          |              |
| Trade Creditors                                | 3,869    | 6,642        |
| BCLP Grant Received                            | 253,969  | -            |
| Tax Payable                                    | 15,731   | 15,663       |
|  | 273,569  | 22,305       |
| <b>13. Borrowings</b>                          |          |              |
| Non-Current                                    |          |              |
| Debenture Loans                                | 1,500    | 1,500        |

|  | 2020    | 30 June 2019 |
|--|---------|--------------|
| <b>14. Provisions</b>  |         |              |
| Current  |         |              |
| Provision for Annual Leave   | 48,803  | 30,370       |
| Provision for Long Service Leave   | 13,024  | -            |
| Superannuation Liability   | 17,503  | 11,728       |
|  | 79,330  | 42,098       |
| Provision for Annual Leave   |         |              |
| Opening Balance 1 July 2019  | 30,370  |              |
| Additional Provisions Raised   | 22,570  |              |
| Amounts Taken  | (4,137) |              |
| Balance at 31 March 2020   | 48,803  |              |
| Provision for Long Service Leave   |         |              |
| Opening Balance 1 July 2019  | -       |              |
| Additional Provisions Raised   | 13,024  |              |
| Amounts Taken  | -       |              |
| Balance at 31 March 2020   | 13,024  |              |
| Total Provisions   |         |              |
| Opening Balance 1 July 2019  | 30,370  | 15,072       |
| Additional Provisions Raised   | 35,594  | 15,451       |
| Amounts Taken  | (4,137) | (153)        |
| Superannuation Liability   | 17,503  | 11,728       |
| Balance at 31 March 2020   | 79,330  | 42,098       |
| <b>15. Reserves</b>  |         |              |
| Asset Revaluation Reserve  |         |              |
| The asset revaluation reserve records revaluations of non-current assets. Under certain circumstances dividends can be declared from this reserve. |         |              |
| <b>16. Capital Commitments</b>   |         |              |
| There are no commitments as at 31 March 2020 (30 June 2019: \$Nil)   |         |              |
| <b>17. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets</b>  |         |              |
| There are no Contingent Liabilities at 31 March 2020 (30 June 2019: \$Nil). There are no Contingent Assets at 31 March 2020 (30 June 2019: \$NIL). |         |              |
| <b>18. Events after the reporting period</b>   |         |              |
| Since 31 March 2020, there have been no events that would materially affect the Financial Statements at Balance Date.                              |         |              |

# NOTES OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## CONTINUED

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

|  | 2020           | 30 June 2019    |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>19. Cash Flow Information</b>   |                |                 |
| Reconciliation of Cash   |                |                 |
| (a) Cash on Hand at the end of the financial period as included in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the Statement of Financial Position as follows: |                |                 |
| Cash at Bank   | 437,749        | 53,152          |
|  | <u>437,749</u> | <u>53,152</u>   |
| (b) Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities with net current period profit  |                |                 |
| Current period profit after income tax   | 33,447         | (9,475)         |
| Cash flows excluded from current period profit:  |                |                 |
| Depreciation Expense   | 5,247          | 9,905           |
| Impairment Loss / (Gain) on Fixed Assets   | (5,310)        | (55,563)        |
| Changes in assets and liabilities:   |                |                 |
| (Increase) / Decrease in Receivables   | 15,243         | 1,934           |
| (Increase) / Decrease in Prepayments   | -              | 1,250           |
| Increase / (Decrease) in Payables  | 251,264        | 51,781          |
| Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions  | 37,232         | (25,960)        |
| Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities  | <u>337,123</u> | <u>(26,128)</u> |

# STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In accordance with a resolution of the committee of Murray Darling Association Inc. the members of the committee declare that the financial statements as set out on pages 36 to 44:

- 1 present a true and fair view of the financial position of Murray Darling Association Inc. as at 31 March 2020 and its performance for the period ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and Associations Incorporation Regulation (NSW) 2010; and
- 2 at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Murray Darling Association Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:



Cr David Thurley - National President



Peter George - Treasurer

Dated: 23 July 2020

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC**

**Report on the Audit of the Financial Report**

**Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc, which comprises the balance sheet as at 31 March 2020, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the period then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Murray Darling Association Inc as at 31 March 2020, and of its financial performance for the period then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009.

**Basis of Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report**

The committee of the Murray Darling Association Inc are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, committees are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



**Warren Pollock**  
MGR ACCOUNTANTS  
mgr@mgr.com.au

16 July 2020

# HONOR ROLL

OF THE MURRAY VALLEY DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE, THE MURRAY VALLEY LEAGUE,  
AND THE MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC.

## LIFE MEMBERS

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Mr Graham Camac          | Meningie    |
| Ms Pauline Frost         | Adelaide    |
| Mr Bill Gorman           | Yarrowonga  |
| Mr Brian J Grogan OAM    | Mildura     |
| Cr Les Hill              | Berri       |
| Dr Terry Hillman         | Lavington   |
| Mr Jim Hullick OAM       | Adelaide    |
| Mr J Bede Mecham         | Wagga Wagga |
| Mr Ken Rogers            | Dubbo       |
| Mr Max Moor              | Barmah      |
| Mr Phillip Moore         | Melbourne   |
| Mr Don Oberin            | Echuca      |
| Mr Kevin Pell OAM        | Nathalia    |
| Cr Wulf Reichler OAM     | Brewarrina  |
| Cr Stuart Anderson OAM   | Moama*      |
| Mr David Dalzell         | Whyalla*    |
| Dr Peter Davies          | Adelaide*   |
| Mr James Wallace Gemmell | Cobram*     |
| Mr Albert Heslop         | Swan Hill*  |
| Mr Ralph Jacobi          | Adelaide*   |

## PRESIDENTS

|                        |             |              |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| D G Padman             | Albury*     | 1944 to 1952 |
| J G Strangman          | Waikerie*   | 1952 to 1956 |
| Henry Lester Smith OBE | Kerang*     | 1956 to 1960 |
| E Verco Whyte          | Wentworth*  | 1960 to 1965 |
| Robert S Rankin OBE    | Rochester*  | 1968 to 1971 |
| Paul Gerard Schmidt    | Mannum*     | 1971 to 1974 |
| Jim W Gemmell          | Cobram*     | 1974 to 1977 |
| Jack J Larkin OAM      | Kooloonong* | 1977 to 1982 |
| Don K Oberin           | Echuca      | 1982 to 1986 |
| Jim M Hullick OAM      | Adelaide    | 1986 to 1989 |

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Mr Ian Killmister             | Nathalia*      |
| Mr Jack James Larkin OAM      | Kooloonong*    |
| Mr Gunnar Vernon Lawrence AM  | Hawthorn*      |
| Mr John Joseph McGuire        | *              |
| Cr Neil McKinnon OAM          | Jerilderie*    |
| Mr T Norm Martin              | Wodonga*       |
| Cr Reg Mengler                | Balranald*     |
| Dr William Andres Merrylees   | Carrathool*    |
| Mr Thomas Ernest Pearsall     | Albury*        |
| Mr Percival Alfred Yeomans    | *              |
| Mr Wal Perry                  | Port Elliott*  |
| Mr Phillip Potter             | Narooma*       |
| Ms Agnes Isabel Robertson     | Albury*        |
| Cr Max Schmidt                | Paringa*       |
| Mr Robert Starritt Rankin OBE | Rochester*     |
| Mr HG Tredinnick              | Murray Valley* |
| Mr Allen Tume                 | Adelaide*      |
| Mr Henry Lester Smith MBE     | Kerang*        |
| Cr Maurice Wilhelm OAM        | Murray Bridge* |
| Mr Percy Weston               | Eurobin*       |

|                    |          |              |
|--------------------|----------|--------------|
| Graham C Camac     | Meningie | 1989 to 1992 |
| Max Moor           | Barmah   | 1992 to 1998 |
| Ray Trestrail      | Albury   | 1998 to 2000 |
| Brian Sharp OAM    | Moama    | 2000 to 2003 |
| Brian J Grogan OAM | Mildura  | 2003 to 2006 |
| Bill Gorman        | Mulwala  | 2006 to 2009 |
| Ken Rogers         | Dubbo    | 2009 to 2013 |
| Greg Toll          | Gunbower | 2013 to 2015 |
| David Thurley      | Albury   | 2015         |

\* Passed



This year the Murray Darling Association celebrates 75 years of rich history.

In 1944, the Murray Valley Development League was formed and its founding conference of the Murray Valley Development League at Yarrowonga on 15 & 16 August. The new league focused on promoting inland development, decentralisation and encourage communities to 'be conscious of their common heritage, the Murray River'.

Seventy-five years later, the Murray Darling Association continues to represent local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating discussion and seeking to inform government policy.

As we celebrate our 75-year history, we also welcome in a new era for Basin communities as we look towards our **Vision 2025**.

The future of a healthy and prosperous Murray Darling Basin relies on all councils working together to ensure local leadership is a national priority.





Goulburn River, Victoria. Picture courtesy of City of Greater Shepparton.