

Chief Executive Officer's Report
October 2020

Emma Bradbury
ceo@mda.asn.au

1. Introduction

A wonderfully busy month of engagements across the Basin has signalled a busy year ahead. I was delighted to meet with councils and communities down the length of the Baarka this month. It was wonderful to see the tenuous but growing sense of optimism across these communities arising from recent rains and inflow. This is a refreshing relief after the years of debilitating drought, fish kills, wild bush fires and Covid-19.

We at the MDA recognise as well as any, and perhaps more than many, that any consultation can only occur with the generosity of time, information and knowledge of the people being engaged. We appreciate this generosity and have developed a process to guide and report on our engagement that aims to give best value and respect to those we engage with.

A brief report on each of these consultations has been developed and are presented to the board further in this report. Each report identifies

- i) **WHO** – are we engaging with
- ii) **WHAT** - did we hear
- iii) **WHEN** – did the engagement taking place
- iv) **WHERE** – did the consultation take place
- v) **WHY** – are we engaging
- vi) **WHAT NEXT** – what do we propose to do with the things we heard and learned, and
- vii) **DID** - we capture all the things you wanted us to hear.

We will continue to refine and develop our engagement processes and tools to best serve the purpose.

You will see from the calendar extract below that the National President Cr Thurley and myself undertook a range of high-level engagements in Canberra on 10-11th of this month, at which we presented and discussed the MDA's strategic plan Vision 2025. A more detailed report on those meetings will be provided in next month's report.

2. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
19/10/2020	Brewarrina Council – Jeff Sowiak and Phil O'Connor	Brewarrina
19/10/2020	Board Meeting 403	Bourke
19/10/2020	Bourke Shire Council – Mayor Hollman and Cr Brown	Bourke
19/10/2020	Radio 2WEB - interview	Bourke
19/10/2020	Individual Member Mr Jack Bennett	Bourke
19/10/2020	Cobar Shire Council - Acting General Manager Mr Kym Miller	Cobar
20/10/2020	Wentworth Group – Roundtable Meeting	Wilcannia
20/10/2020	Broken Hill Council – Presentation to Mayor and Councillors	Broken Hill
21/10/2020	Breakfast Meeting Broken Hill Council – Mayor Turley, GM James Roncon and Cr Browne	Broken Hill
21/10/2020	Mr Graeme McCrabb & Samantha Lucas	Menindee
23/10/2020	Wentworth Shire Council – Cr MacAllister and Mr Ken Ross	Wentworth
26/10/2020	Region 5 Ordinary Meeting	Zoom
26/10/2020	2021 National Conference discussion Wentworth Shire Council	Zoom

26/10/2020	MDBA – Regional local government briefing on Basin Plan 2020 Evaluation	Zoom
29/10/2020	One Basin CRC Co-Design Partners Meeting – Education and Training Program	Zoom
29/10/2020	MDBA Engagement plans	Zoom
05/11/2020	Higher Logic, Membership Engagement	Zoom
05/11/2020	Peter Cullen Trust – Leadership Program delivery 2021	Zoom
06/11/2020	Region 6 Ordinary Meeting	Zoom
09/11/2020	Mr Glen Connolly – 2021 National Conference	Albury
10/11/2020	MDA/CSIRO Relationship Discussions and Official Signing of the CSIRO/MDA Agreement	Canberra
10/11/2020	Sir Angus Houston and Phillip Glyde MDBA	Canberra
10/11/2020	Mr Ramzi Jabbour – Inspector General’s Office	Canberra
10/11/2020	The Hon Mark Coulton MP	Canberra
10/11/2020	Will Howard – Department of Agriculture	Canberra
10/11/2020	The Hon Sussan Ley MP	Canberra
10/11/2020	Senator Perin Davey	Canberra
11/11/2020	The Hon Michael McCormack DMP	Canberra
11/11/2020	Matthew Coulton Bureau of Meteorology	Canberra
11/11/2020	Lyn O’Connell Deputy Secretary and Rachel Connell First Assistance Secretary – Department of Agriculture	Canberra
11/11/2020	Ms Jody Swirepik – Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder	Canberra
11/11/2020	The Hon Keith Pitt MP (rescheduled)	Canberra
11/11/2020	Shadow Minister Terri Butler MP	Canberra
12/11/2020	MDBA Peak Agency Briefing	Zoom
12/11/2020	One Basin CRC – Final All Partner meeting	Zoom
13/11/2020	Region 11 Ordinary Meeting	Zoom

3. Meetings

The Executive have implemented a new consultation and engagement framework, which will be the MDA’s new standard of consultation process.

Recently visiting the Western NSW regions, the following reports have been developed, these reports have been sent to each council and stakeholder with whom I met for their further feedback if required.

19th – 23rd October 2020	
Consultation Reports	
<u>Barranald</u>	<u>Cobar</u>
<u>Bourke</u>	<u>Menindee</u>
<u>Brewarrina</u>	<u>Warren</u>
<u>Broken Hill</u>	<u>Wentworth</u>

4. 77th National Conference and AGM – Wentworth

Communications have commenced with the Wentworth Shire Council to establish a working committee for logistical and preparation planning for the 77th National Conference. Date selection is currently being investigated taking into consideration Federal/State/Local Government parliamentary sitting dates.

The MDA team will be travelling to Wentworth and Menindee early January 2021 to meet with the Wentworth Committee and to visualise possible study tour options.

The theme for the conference is yet to be launched, however several brain storming huddles have been undertaken, with consultation to be held with the Wentworth Shire Council.

5. Basin Community Leadership Program

a) Milestone Completion - Murray Darling Association Inc – Activity ID 4-C8GEB1X– Milestone 4-EOXWHME Acceptance and Payment Advice

The Milestone submission has been assessed and accepted by the Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment.

b) Warren Workshops

15th and 16th October 2020 – Warren Workshop

We were absolutely blown away by the inspiring group of individuals we met this month in Warren at the latest Basin Communities Leadership Program workshop! A huge thank you to the participants for bringing their best selves to the workshop, including their energy, knowledge, and passion for making their community and the Murray-Darling Basin the best place that it can be. Thank you also to [Warren Shire Council](#), the Warren Services Club and facilitator Kate MacMaster from [The Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust](#).



Emma Bradbury



Chief Executive Officer



Murray Darling Association

Consultation Report

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This was an opportunity for CEO Emma Bradbury to meet with our councils; to introduce Brendan Murphy, *Director of Regional Engagement Northern Basin, Office of the Interim Inspector-General of Water Compliance* to key stakeholders; to consult on issues pertaining to the MDA's proposed name change and regional boundary review; and to hear first hand the issues affecting our members across this region.

Where:	Brewarrina Brewarrina Shire Council	Who:	Mayor Phillip O'Connor – Brewarrina Shire Council Jeff Sowiak – General Manager
When:	October 17-18, 2020		Cr Greg Mohr – Dubbo Regional Council John Reidy – CEO Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Land Council

Photos from consultation



E Bradbury meeting with Jeff Sowiak and Brendan Murphy



E Bradbury meeting with Mayor Phillip O'Connor

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Clear and consistent position on water sharing in the Basin: "It just has to be fair." Response from government has contributed to erosion in community confidence.

Sound relationship between Dubbo Regional Council and smaller water dependent councils is valued.

Concern over inadequate consultation process resulting in a 'sub-optimal' outcome over the Brewarrina fish ladder. Confidence and trust in government to consult and deliver water management projects that reflect community input and knowledge is at a deep low.

Where to from here?

What will we do with this information to add value:

- Present to board
- Inform policy development
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Notes:



Murray Darling Association

Consultation Report

Developed a better understanding of the role and work of the Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Land Council ([Bre LALC](#)).

Support for an enlarged 'Region 4' to take in the councils of western NSW down the Barwon-Darling system.

Support for the name change to 'Murray Darling Local Government Association. Makes sense and will avoid confusion.

Emma to follow up meeting with Dubbo Region Council to re-engage active membership.

Work with Bre LALC to support participation in the Collarenabri Leadership Program

It is important to us to ensure that what we heard is what you intended. As part of our consultation standard, we invite you to review the information above, and provide your approval or additional feedback.

Approved

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Brendan Murphy, Director of Regional Engagement Northern Basin, Office of the Interim Inspector-General of Water Compliance was unable to attend this meeting due to border restrictions, with Cobar being outside the Qld bubble.

Where:	Cobar Cobar Shire Council	Who:	Mr Kym Miller – A/General Manager Isabelle Pretty – former councillor
When:	October 20, 2020		

Photos from consultation



E Bradbury with former councillor, shearers cook and local identity Isobel Pretty



Cobar celebrates its mining history



Acting General Manager Kym Miller

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

The extractive industries in Cobar mean a different but equally important relationship with the River and water resource.

Meeting with A/GM Kym Miller on Tuesday was a great exchange of ideas and information. Mayor Lillian Brady was an apology.

Past Councillor Isobel Pretty is a living treasure and an iconic Ambassador for the region.

Support for inclusion of Cobar in 'Region 4'.

Cobar keen to attend the 2021 Strategic Planning workshop

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Send invitation and information to 2021 strategic planning workshop

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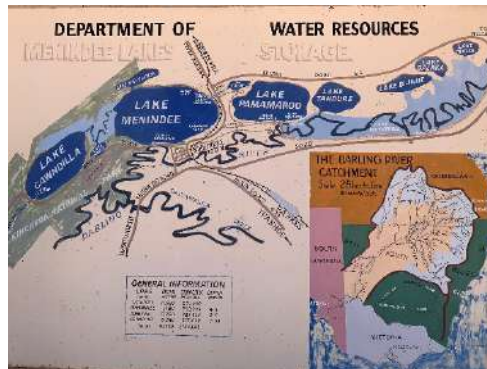
This was an opportunity for CEO Emma Bradbury to meet with our councils; to introduce Samantha Lucas, *Director of Regional Engagement Southern Basin, Office of the Interim Inspector-General of Water Compliance* to key stakeholders; to consult on issues pertaining to the MDA's proposed name change and regional boundary review; and to hear first hand the issues affecting our members across this region.

Where:	Menindee Central Darling Shire Council	Who:	Graeme McCrabb – Local Leader and advocate
When:	October 20-21, 2020		Richard Ainsworth – Murray Darling Basin Authority Regional Engagement Officer
			Rachel Strachan – Menindee Lakes SDLAM SAP
			Allan White - Menindee Lakes SDLAM SAP

Photos from consultation



Graeme McCrabb and Samantha Lewis at regulator



Local knowledge key to understanding issues and opportunities



Samantha Lucas, Richard Ainsworth & E Bradbury banks of Lake Menindee

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Menindee Lakes system is one of the most significant nurseries for native fish in the Murray Darling Basin.

Understanding of the issues and associated business case for the [Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project](#) requires an understanding of the on ground layout of the existing water storages and operating infrastructure. Further education required.

Deep respect for the rich Aboriginal history, artefacts, and continuing custodianship of the Baarkanji.

High regard for the work of council and keen to return to elected representation.

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Consultation Report

Frustration expressed with consultation and engagement process with DPIE. Confidence and trust in government to consult and deliver water management projects that reflect community input and knowledge is at a deep low.
Importance of defined flow targets at and below Wilcannia, and value of smaller flows to maintain system charge and connectivity.

Menindee Lakes SDLAM Stakeholder Advisory Group submission to Minister Pavey October 2020 (attached)

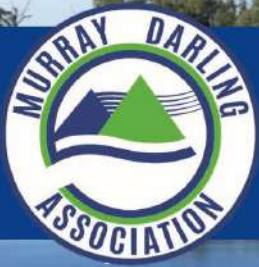
- Consider options for the study tour for Conference 2021 to Menindee
- Develop educational and comms assets to build knowledge and progress inter-regional understanding.

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Where:	Broken Hill Broken Hill City Council	Who:	Mayor Darriea Turley Cr Marion Browne Cr Maureen Clark James Roncon – General Manager
When:	October 20-21, 2020		

Photos from consultation



E Bradbury providing a briefing at Broken Hill City Council



E Bradbury with Broken Hill City Council Mayor Darriea Turley



The Miners' Memorial on Broken Hill's Line of Lode

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

The extractive industries in Broken Hill mean a different but equally important relationship with the River and water resource.

Council welcomed the opportunity to hear from Brendan Murphy of the Inspector General's office.

Council's interest in effective water management spans not only their own mining and extractive industries, there is strong support for a healthy connected system to serve the interests of their neighbouring councils and communities including Menindee, Pooncarie and Wentworth.

Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline operating efficiently.

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Council reflected favourably on DPIEs endeavours at effective consultation, with DPIE staff showing genuine efforts in this space.

Mayor Turley provided feedback on the proposed name change from her perspective as a board member of LGNSW. LGNSW concerned that an organisation that can afford voting entitlements to an interest group should not be designated an LGA. Cr Turley recommended further consultation with the State President of LGNSW.

Support for an enlarged 'Region 4' to take in the councils of western NSW down the Barwon-Darling system.

Emma to coordinate a follow up meeting with State President of LGNSW.

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Where:	Warren and Macquarie Marshes Warren Shire Council	Who:	Mayor Milton Quigley – Warren Shire Council David Duncan – Macquarie Marshes Environmental Trust Uncle Bill Darcy – Community Elder Michael Wrathal - CEWO
When:	October 16-17, 2020		

Photos from consultation



Basin Communities Leadership Program participants with facilitator Kate MacMaster



DiSC leadership profile activity in Warren



Burrima – Macquarie Marshes

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Warren has a strong and resilient community with clear leadership across all levels of the community apparent. Council building was undergoing a facelift, town was beautifully presented with roads and open spaces clean and well utilised. Kids were open and courteous and were making great use of the Macquarie River for swimming and social connection.

We were inspired by the individuals who attended the Warren Basin Communities Leadership Program workshops. The leadership program was well attended. Mayor Milton Quigley attended as a mentor, as did Michael Wrathall from the CEWO.

Macquarie Wetlands Assoc has created a world class wonder at Burrima, on the Macquarie Marshes. It is breathtaking in every sense, and an absolute inspiration. The project is a fusion of irrigation, First Nations

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- Present to board
- Include in Delegates Report
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Notes:

- Emma to follow up meeting with council.



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and environmental interests all shared equally by truly passionate people. A terrific example of what can happen when diverse interests converge rather than collide.

Confidence and trust in government (NSW) to consult and deliver water management projects that reflect community input and knowledge is at a deep low.

Invite MMET to address board/present at conference

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Where:	Wentworth Wentworth Shire Council	Who:	Cr Jane MacAllister – Chair Region 4
When:	October 20-21, 2020		Cr Jason Modica – Mildura Rural City Council
			Ken Ross – General Manager

Photos from consultation



Samantha Lucas, E Bradbury, Cr Modica and Cr MacAllister



E Bradbury, Cr Modica, Sam Lucas, Cr MacAllister and GM Ken Ross discuss current issues affecting Region 4



Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Cr MacAllister welcomed Samantha Lucas, Director of Regional Engagement Southern Basin, Office of the Interim Inspector-General of Water Compliance.

General brief on the trip so far, current issues and exchange of ideas.

Importance of connectivity.

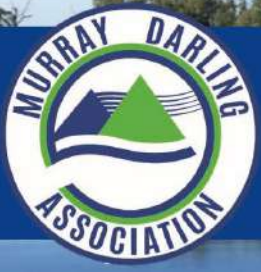
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider options for the study to Menindee
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Where:	Bourke Bourke Shire Council	Who:	Cr Ian Cole – Bourke Shire Council Ms Leonie Brown – A/General Manager Jack Bennett – Long time MDA member, retired councillor of over 23 years service.
When:	October 19, 2020		

Photos from consultation



E Bradbury, Brendan Murphy and Cr Ian Cole



E Bradbury with Rod Corfe at Radio 2WEB



E Bradbury with MDA member and former Councillor of over 27 years' service Jack Bennett

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Bourke Shire Council maintains a strong commitment to the irrigation interests of the region, with council a strong contributor to the Barwon-Darling WSP through the advice and experience of Cr Cole.

Radio 2WEB plays a significant and balanced role in exploring the interests and reporting the issues across a wide regional footprint.

Concern over the construction of the facility of the Bourke sewerage system and risk of adverse impacts on water quality in the river.

Support for an enlargement of 'Region 4' to re-establish the old 'Mungindi to Menindee' footprint taking in western NSW down the Barwon-Darling system.

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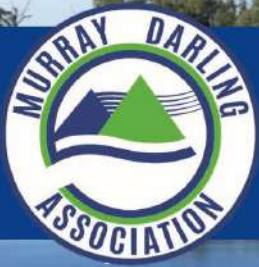


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Where:	Balranald Balranald Shire Council	Who:	Mike Colreavy – Administrator Gavin Helgaland - Manager – Strategic Development Council's MDA delegate
When:	October 22, 2020		

Photos from consultation



E Bradbury meeting with Balranald Shire Council Administrator Mike Colreavy



Balranald Shire Council office building



Welcome to Balranald Shire Council area

Key learnings:

What were the key messages / issues identified?

Council under administration, with positive support from community.

Support for an enlargement of 'Region 4'. Also identified reliance on and connection to the Murrumbidgee system.

Balranald keen to be involved with the Basin Communities Leadership Program.

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- Gavin to collaborate Regional mapping plan.
- Invite Mike to strategic workshop 2020, and provide access to water literacy materials.



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