



# CEO's Report

November 2021

Murray Darling Association Incorporated  
ABN 64 636 490 493

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## 1. Introduction and conclusion

It is with tremendous excitement, gratitude, and optimism for the future of the Murray Darling Association that I pen this, my last report as CEO of this remarkable organisation.

With all the indulgence of reflection, there will be plenty of ‘I’s in the following lines as I reflect on and where we have come in the almost 8 years I have been in the role, and the opportunities ahead as I vacate the space,

In that time we have seen the Basin community travel the often painful course from storm to norm, and now well into the deep reforms of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We have seen communities react to changing water availability and recognise that drought, climate change, agricultural practices, floods, technologies all contribute to the challenging but necessary balance of equitable water sharing, not just in the Basin but across Australia. We have also seen local government and the MDA lead the way in building consensus by sharing knowledge to understand the experience of communities beyond their own.

I am proud of my part in the role the MDA has played in making local leadership a national priority; in developing trust, unity, equity, and growth; increasing collaboration, connecting catchments and communities; recognising that our Plan is our future enabling us to regenerate a healthy, working Basin.

If these laudable achievements sound familiar, it is because these are the themes that have set the agenda for a national conversation through successive MDA National Conferences. Now recognised as a seminal event on the local government and water sector calendar, the MDA’s national conference and AGMs have been a highlight of my time in the role, but one that I will happily hand on to my successor.

And that brings me to my final, and more forward looking reflections. Few CEO’s have the privilege of handing their legacy on to a more capable and experienced team than I have in the current Board and our incoming CEO, Mark Lamb. Under their collective leadership I have every confidence that the MDA will continue to prosecute the case for local government to be afforded a role in the national decision making framework as we implement further reforms, to elevate local issues to the regional and the national agenda, and to serve the needs of our members and stakeholders well into the future.

My final word is, of course to acknowledge the wonderful experience I have had in working with our amazing members and stakeholders; with this Board who manage time and again to carve consensus from chaos; with our amazing Treasurer Peter George who has wrangled efficiencies and transparency that are the envy of any in the sector; with my dream-team of staff who have consistently delivered beyond all expectations; and most particularly with David Thurley, National President since 2015.

Working for and with David has been a joy and an honour. His unwavering support and professionalism, his wit and intellect, and his quiet but steely leadership have so often smoothed the seemingly insurmountable to clear a path to a better way. And I thank David (and Sue!) for all their incredible work, their friendship and great good humour.

I am beyond grateful for my time at the MDA. I leave the job knowing our collective efforts have made a difference and that momentum is gathering! Local leadership - it’s a national priority.

## 2. Key Meetings and Engagement

| Date                 | Event/meeting  | Location                |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 15/10/21             | Nicole Emara – CSIRO   | Held Virtually          |
| 15/10/21             | SQNNSW Drought Resilience Hub Partner / Member workshop  | Held Virtually          |
| 18/10/21             | Families and Communities Program Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) Activity – Inclusive Communities Grants | Held Virtually          |
| 26/10/21             | MDA CEO Recruitment – Long-list  | Held Virtually          |
| 27/10/21             | Deanne Armstrong – C4EM  | Echuca                  |
| 27/10/21             | MDA / CSIRO – Science and Advisory Committee   | Held Virtually          |
| 4/11/21 –<br>5/11/21 | MDA CEO Recruitment – Panel Interviews   | Albury                  |
| 9/11/21              | ONE Basin CRC: All Partner Meeting   | Held Virtually          |
| 10/11/21             | MDA CEO Recruitment – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage Interview to the Board   | Albury / Held Virtually |
| 10/11/21             | MDA Planning Committee Meeting   | Held Virtually          |
| 11/11/21             | MDBA – November Peak Groups Briefing [SEC=OFFICIAL]  | Held Virtually          |
| 12/11/21             | SA Inter-regional meeting 2021/21 – Planning Meeting   | Held Virtually          |
| 15/11/21             | Murray Darling Association Briefing – Nick McBride   | Held Virtually          |
| 17/11/21             | Senator Perin Davey  | Deniliquin              |
| 22/11/21             | Hon Mark Coulton MP  | Held Virtually          |
| 24/11/21             | The Hon Melinda Pavey MP – NSW Minister for Water  | Held Virtually          |
| 24/11/21             | The NWGA Advisory Body meeting<br>(Presentation to the National Water Grid Advisory Body)                        | Held Virtually          |



**Emma Bradbury**  
Chief Executive Officer