



Chief Executive Officer Monthly Report

April 2021

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Key Meetings and Engagement.....	3
3. Highlights.....	4
4. Operational Update.....	5

1. Introduction

What a couple of months it has been! Floods, road closures, snap COVID lockdowns, we have experienced it all. Over the past three weeks, I have had the pleasure and the privilege of facilitating the MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program workshop in Queensland and northern NSW, in collaboration with the award winning, inspirational leadership facilitator Julia Spicer.

I have met with and heard from some amazing participants, all deeply committed to the future of their communities and to developing the leadership skills and pathways.

We have worked with indigenous leaders looking to lead for change through stronger representation of Aboriginal people on local government. We have worked with industry leaders developing technologies that not only meet but exceed current regulatory standards in water management, compliance, and transparency. We have worked with young leaders preparing to speak their truth to power and lead their communities into a vibrant, prosperous, and connected future. Participants come into the course looking to lead in their local community and leave the course as local leaders in the Basin community, wanting to be part of the solution and committed to collaborative action.

All these people have inspired me, have put their best selves forward and have convinced me beyond any doubt that local leadership is, and must remain a national priority.

2. Key Meetings and Engagement

Date	Event/meeting	Location
12 – 19 February	Northern NSW Engagement Tour with Mayor Craig Davies, Narromine Council including meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BROC meeting and Region 11 Meeting ▪ Bogan Shire Council ▪ Cobar Shire Council ▪ Coonamble Shire Council ▪ Warren Shire Council ▪ Warrumbungle Shire Council ▪ Coonabarabran Shire Council ▪ Mid-Western Council 	Inverell Nyngan Cobar Coonamble Warren Coonabarabran Mudgee
18 February	Floodplain Harvesting Rules in the Gwydir Valley - Southern Basin Representatives Consultation	Virtual
19 February	Meeting with DPIE NSW	Sydney
23 February	Meeting with Minister Pavey	Virtual
25 February	ONE Basin CRC Interview	Virtual
2 March	Meeting with Minister Keith Pitt and Senator Perin Davey	Deniliquin
1 March	National Conference Planning Meeting and scoping visit	Wentworth
10 March	Meeting with Murray River Council Mayor Chris Bilkey and General Manager Terry Dodds.	Echuca
12 March	MDBA Climate Resilience Summit with Cr David Thurley	Canberra
17 March	MDBA Stakeholder Dinner	Echuca
25 March	Meeting with Mayor McVeigh Western Downs Regional Council	Charleville
25 March	Productivity Commission Meeting - Register of Foreign-owned Water Entitlements	Virtual
26 March	Presentation to Darling Downs & SW Qld Council of Mayors Meeting	Charleville

29 March – 9 April	MDA Basin Communities Leadership Program Northern Basin Workshops	Cunnamulla Dirranbandi St George Collarenebri
6 April	Presentation to Namoi Unlimited Board Meeting	Virtual
15 April	MDBA Peak Groups Meeting	Virtual

3. Highlights

3.1 MDBA Climate Resilience Summit

National President David Thurley and I attended the MDBA Climate Resilience Summit in Canberra. The summit brought together an important array of community leaders representing interests as diverse as tourism (EcoTourism Australia) to crisis response and management (Red Cross Australia) to explore the challenges, priorities and responses to climate change, and the role of the MDBA in that space. The summit chair, Sir Angus Houston committed to reconvene the summit in 3 months for follow up on actions and look at “where to from here”.

3.2 Funding Opportunities

MDA Strategic Plan Vision 2025 – Pillar 4 - Corporate Development commits to ensuring our organisation is financially sustainable and corporately robust. The strategic objectives relate to:

- Good governance and financial sustainability
- Effective communications
- Being an employer of choice.

Specifically:

<p>4.2.2 Our membership and business enterprises generate sufficient income to meet our operational expenditure, while grant funding supports projects and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adopt a modular and sustainable business model ▶ MDA maintains submission-ready project proposals that reflect the needs of our member councils and communities ▶ Consult with our members and stakeholders to identify key community needs and project opportunities ▶ Actively seek funding for the submission-ready proposals. ▶ Prepare quality projects proposals that are well-developed and meet funding opportunities.
<p>4.2.6 Project revenues are modular and contribute to scalable projects and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Utilise our library of scalable, submission-ready projects to rapidly and effectively tap into grants programs.

I am pleased to advise that in the month of March/April, the MDA has lodged 9 grant applications across 3 programs totalling almost \$8.5m.

Funding Program	Project	Budget	Delivery Partners
Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Fund - (Round 3)	Regional Economic Diversification Program	\$4,106,646	MDA
	Basin Communities Leadership Program II	\$966,046	MDA
	Local Government Centre for Excellence	\$1,000,000	MDA CSIRO Murray River Council
	Climate Ready and Water Secure Regions	\$719,000	MDA Aither RAMJO
	Basin Communities Resilience Scorecard	\$868,760	MDA Catalyse
	Murray-Darling Basin Round-Table	\$133,000	MDA Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists
Building Better Regions Fund - Community Investments Stream - Round 5	Project planning and fundraising strategy	\$20,000	MDA It's On Purpose
	National Conference - Livestream	\$30,460	MDA
Destination NSW	National Conference Contribution	\$30,000	MDA

3.3 Membership

Following the February trip with Cr Craig Davies, the following councils have commenced paid membership with the MDA.

- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Coonamble Shire Council
- Mid Western Shire Council

4. Operational Update

With so much time spent out of the office in recent months, I must commend and thank the team here at the office for their dedication, commitment and exceptional teamwork.



Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer