



79th Annual General Meeting AGENDA

Time: 3:30pm

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2023

**Location: Murray Bridge Performing Arts & Function Centre,
17 Bridge St, Murray Bridge SA 5253**

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

Contents

1.	Welcome	3
1.1	Welcome Address	3
2.	Attendance	3
2.1	Present3	
2.2	Apologies	3
2.3	Declarations of Interest	3
3.	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	3
4.	2022 - 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements	3
5.	Motions on Notice.....	4
Motion 5.1	REDUCTION OF FERAL ANIMAL POPULATIONS.....	4
Motion 5.2	DAM OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE	5
Motion 5.3	DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY UNREGULATED GROWTH AND THE COST OF THE NEXT DROUGHT.....	6
Motion 5.4	WILCANNIA WEIR	8
Motion 5.5	NUMERIC EXTRACTION LIMITS	9
Motion 5.6	MEETING WATER DEMANDS WITH LESS WATER.....	11
Motion 5.7	MEMBERSHIP VALUE PROPOSITION	13
Motion 5.8	REDUCTION OF RIVER WATER RELIANCE FOR NON-RIPARIAN COUNCILS.....	15
Motion 5.9	TAILEM BEND – KEITH – BORDERTOWN PIPELINE.....	17
Motion 5.10	ON-FARM EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES.....	19
Motion 5.11	RAMSAR WETLAND FUNDING	20
Motion 5.12	LEVY BANK MAINTENANCE.....	23
Motion 5.13	RIVERBANK SLUMPING	24
Motion 5.14	EUROPEAN CARP CONTROL MEASURES	26
Motion 5.15	REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION	28
Motion 5.16	MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN – UNREGULATED FLOWS	29
Motion 5.17	TRANSPARENCY AND COOPERATION	30
Motion 5.18	QUARTERLY SDLAM PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTS.....	31
Motion 5.19	RESTORING OUR RIVERS BILL	32
Motion 5.20	RESTORING OUR RIVERS BILL	35
Motion 5.21	3 rd PARTY REVIEW OF BASIN COMMUNITIES.....	37
Motion 5.22	PROTECTION OF REGIONAL WATER UTILITIES.....	38
Motion 5.23	FUNDING COMMITMENT FOR SAFE AND SECURE WATER PROGRAMS	39

Virtual Meeting Log in Details

[TEAMS LINK](#) (Meeting ID: 412 224 551 221)

1. Welcome

1.1 Welcome Address

Cr David Thurley, OAM

MDA National President

2. Attendance

2.1 Present

2.2 Apologies

2.3 Declarations of Interest

3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Refer to Attachment 3

Recommendation:

That the minutes of 78th MDA Annual General Meeting held on 21 September 2022 be accepted as an accurate record.

4. 2022 - 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements

Refer to Attachment 4

Recommendation:

That the 2022 – 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2022 be received and noted.

5. Motions on Notice

Motion 5.1

REDUCTION OF FERAL ANIMAL POPULATIONS

Region 1

Recommendation:

The member Councils of Region 1 move that:

1. The NSW Minister for the Environment, the Hon Ingrid Stitt repeal the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018, or make such amendments that would allow a rapid reduction in the number of feral horses in the national parks, and
2. The Federal Minister for the Environment, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, the NSW Minister for the Environment, the Hon Penny Sharpe, the Victorian Minister for the Environment, the Hon Ingrid Stitt, and the ACT Minister for the Environment, the Hon Shane Rattenbury take such steps as necessary to reduce the number of feral animals, including, but not limited to, deer and horses, as quickly as possible.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

The feral horse population in Kosciuszko National Park has increased to almost 19,000 in Spring 2022 as a result of high rainfall and abundant feed and there has been a similar increase in the population of deer. Grazing pressure and damage caused by their hooves threatens the survival of alpine plants and animals, including endangered species such as the mountain pygmy possum, mountain skink and corroboree frog, as well as the sphagnum moss and ferns at the headwaters of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

Recommendation:

1. That MDA Region 1 encourage the Basins Officials Committee (BOC) to give the MDBA direction on how to use the last 386GL of airspace in Hume Dam to provide meaningful flood mitigation to downstream communities. (The BOC is the vehicle for giving direction to the MDBA).
2. That in forecast wet years, the MDBA predict inflows on the basis of flows that can be reasonably expected and not use the current serially correlated flow regime which uses historic lows from a given point in time.
3. That the MDBA give heavy weighting to short term BoM forecasts.
4. That the MDBA negotiate with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEHW) to underwrite any airspace not recovered after pre-releasing during flood operations.

Background:

Hume Dam is currently operated under three pillars of governance.

1. Protect the structure at all costs.
2. Store as much water as possible.
3. Provide flood mitigation where possible.

Unfortunately, the MDBA treat pillars 2 and 3 above as being mutually exclusive. Under current rules the last 386GL (12.8%) of airspace at Hume Dam can be used for flood mitigation but this volume is not being utilised. For example, in 2016 where the Murray Valley experienced catastrophic flooding Hume dam was allowed to fill to 98% and went from minimum releases of 600ML/day to releases of 45,000ML/day 10 days later, and it kept getting worse from there. This was despite BoM short term forecasts predicting huge rainfall totals over the catchment. Hume was essentially allowed to fill and spill, and catastrophic flooding occurred. Last year when Hume was 97% full in July the same thing happened yet MDBA officials said that Hume was not guaranteed of filling despite every climate model in existence forecasting extremely wet La Nina conditions. Over the next four months over two times the total volume of Hume dam was passed as floodwater resulting in extreme damage to property in the Murray Valley through to South Australia.

Serially correlated flow calculations by their very nature will always underestimate inflows i.e. inflows will always be greater than what is allowed for. If you don't have a realistic expectation of what is coming in, how can you manage what needs to be let out?

In wet years the MDBA discount BoM forecasts because 'they might be wrong' but in dry years they follow BoM forecasts to the letter. It begs the question as to who within the MDBA thinks they have a better ability than the BoM to forecast weather events. In wet years the MDBA need to give heavy weighting to BoM forecasts.

When on the odd occasion the MDBA does consider Hume will fill and decides to pre-release water in advance of inflows this pre-releasing is always conservative because they always want to guarantee filling after an event. Pre-releasing is generally considered good for the environment and this water does not come off any environmental water account. If the CEWH was prepared to underwrite say 5% of airspace, then if Hume did not fill after releasing mitigating flows before demand exceeded inflows then that % shortfall would come off the CEWH's water account. This would give river operators significant wriggle room to provide some meaningful flood mitigation to downstream communities whilst also providing significant environmental outcomes through the pre-releasing process. CEWH has in the past has shown some appetite for this concept.

Motion 5.3 DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY UNREGULATED GROWTH AND THE COST OF THE NEXT DROUGHT

Region 4

Recommendation:

For the Murray Darling Association to call on the Federal and State Environmental Ministers to confirm the scientific commitment to reach the target of 3200GL of water in the environmental account.

Objective:

Increasing the health of waterways in the driest years of the Murray Darling Basins (MDA) ephemeral cycle. To acknowledge the hyper political nature of returning water to the Murray Darling Basin for the purpose of increasing overall Murray Darling Basin Health and acknowledging the economic cost of climate change fuelled droughts.

To acknowledge the extraordinary growth of crops planted in the Murray Darling Basin from the year 2000. To analyse this growth on the back of the Water Act of 2007 and pre amendment Basin Plan and their premise to protect, preserve and rejuvenate waterways in the Murray Darling Basin. To navigate a way through the next drought whilst acknowledging the colonial boom and bust cycle in the Murray Darling Basin. Creating options to reduce the overall negative outcomes associated with drought while bringing health back to our rivers and waterways with considered regulation and transparency.

When the original pre amendment target of 3200 GL is met there would be an overall environmental benefit through achieving the goals of the Water Act and Basin Plan. Flow and connectivity would follow then community and amenity benefit with the overall goal of sustainable waterways coexisting with healthy working River's supporting horticulture and agriculture. Revision of previous droughts and how devastating they have been for water reliant industries would give industry legislatures and communities an opportunity to view the vulnerable position many towns and industries are already in regarding water availability and deliverability. The potential shortfall in water supply already exists today before cyclical droughts begin to challenge towns communities and businesses in the Murray Darling Basin.

Key Arguments:

There would be an overall environmental and ecological benefit initially, then community and amenity benefit with the overall goal of sustainable waterways coexisting with healthy working Rivers and sustainable horticulture and agriculture.

What is the current context/issue?

Water privatization and commodification driven by unbundling of land from water has deconstructed the importance of non-consumptive water in River Systems and on flood plains. This generated a Goldrush/Water rush mentality diminishing the centrality of water availability for the commons. The debate on water has centred on wealth gain and protection rather than ecological system protection and rehabilitation. From 1997 to 2018, the irrigable area in the Mallee catchment increased by 40,825 hectares, from 40,325 hectares to 81,150 hectares.

The pace of development has continued to increase since data was collected.

In 2000, Australia had approximately 3,546 hectares (ha) of almond tree plantations. By 2019, the rapid expansion of this industry had increased almond-growing land to 53,014 ha – a 900% rise in less than 20 years. Mildura and surrounding districts hold 328GL of Permanent water but require close to 600 GL to water all permanent plantings which is purchased from the temporary market. This position is precarious in low intake years, and it would be an unmitigated disastrous in drought. Noting that Almonds Australia called for a moratorium on new plantings in 2019.

This growth mantra and politicized decision making with in the Murray Darling Basin is evidenced in the 2018 decision of the Federal Government to return 70GL of Water allocated to the environment back to the market. Politically ignoring the premise of the Water Act the pre amendment Murray Darling Basin Plan and the hydrological needs of the Basin.

A reduction of the volume of permanent and perennial plantings in the Basin needs deep consideration as we move into a dry cycle. With greater value placed on flow connectivity and the protection of the Murray Darling Basin's natural assets.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

With the Murray Darling Basin predominately wet from very large floods developers and investors can underestimate how devastating a Millennium sized drought could be. The Millenium drought is a stark reminder of the ephemerality of the River's in the Murray Darling Basin and the ongoing waltz between flood and drought.

The clear risk if this motion does not get up is that the result of unregulated growth of horticultural and agricultural plantings will need water in the middle of a Millenium style drought. Water will be unavailable to potentially up to 50% of all water holders (allocations went under 50% during the Millenium Drought). The economic reality of this downturn will be immeasurable. It could create a wealth transference within the Murray Darling Basin never witnessed before. We will be left with a few commodities who can afford water and those who only have the option to sell. We have lived this before and somehow the reality of the limited water in the Murray Darling Basin periodically is ignore. The financial cost of drought and drought recovery for businesses makes a mockery of the reason for unbundling water initially. Increasing water needs overlapping with decreasing water availability will only ever present a shortfall. This outcome will be devastating for community's environment horticulture and agriculture.

A deeper consideration of the history of the Water Act and the Murray Darling Basin plan provided at the 2019 South Australian Royal Commission. The 2020 NSW ICAC report into Water Management and Compliance and the Citizens inquiry into the Health of the Darling/Barka River and Menindee Lakes could help alleviate manage and prepare for the next drought potentially exacerbated by the climate change.

[NSW Government - allegations concerning management of water in NSW and systemic noncompliance with the Water Management Act 2000 \(Operations Avon and Mezzo\) - Independent Commission Against Corruption](#)

[Department for Environment and Water - Murray-Darling Basin Royal ...](#)

Investigation-into-complaints-of-corruption-in-the-management-of-water-in-nsw-and-systemic-noncompliance-with-the-water-management-act-2000-Avon_Nov2020.pdf

[2019 Citizens' Inquiry - Australian Peoples' Tribunal](#)

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

The broader benefits of this motion would be the ongoing health and longevity of Murray Darling Basin communities and working Rivers operating within the ecological parameters of ephemerality and variable intakes, providing consistency to horticulture and agriculture outside of the historic boom bust cycle. With consideration of climate change, climate change mitigation actions and the pressure of unregulated growth.

Recommendation:

The Executive Members of Murray Darling Association Region 4 request that the State and Federal NSW Labor Governments follow through on their commitment to rebuild the Wilcannia Weir and call on the State and Federal Labor Governments and relevant identified Ministers to complete the new weir.

Objective:

To have the NSW government honour their commitment to the people of Wilcannia and broader Barwon Darling region and people. To improve water quality, to enhance cultural connection to the river, to improve water management of the weir pool, to increase tourism opportunities and investment, better recreational amenity to walk picnic and fish. To improve native fish passage.

The community of Wilcannia would benefit from the construction of the promised new Weir. To improve water quality, to enhance cultural connection to the river, to improve water management of the weir pool, to increase tourism opportunities and investment, better recreational amenity to walk picnic and fish. To improve native fish passage.

To have the weir completed. Which will intern increase the weir pool to supply 9 months of clean water well above the 5 months storage the old Weir provides. To promote fish passage and connectivity on the Darling River. To bring amenity and access to all who live along the river.

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

The funding for the weir was first announced by Niall Blair and David Littleproud in 2018. The re-affirmed by Melinda Pavey in 2021.

The current Wilcannia Weir was built in the 1942 and refurbished in 1988. It was originally built of concrete and timber. It has no fish ladder, is technologically redundant and has served its original purpose. The community have been waiting patiently to have the new structure completed form the first funding announcement in 2018. The new weir would benefit the town and assist in the management of water supply.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

There are huge risks that this upgrade will be overlooked and pushed into the future for many reasons. This explores and exposes the out of site out of mind reality Western NSW suffer from when it comes to water, water infrastructure upgrades and funding. The original Niall Blair promise is fading into the past rapidly. An assurance from the Federal and NSW Government that this Weir is completed would show that Western NSW is not the forgotten region of the Murray Darling Basin.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

To complete the promised upgrade of the Wilcannia Weir would assist in bringing attention to the stresses Wilcannia has undergone over the last 10 years. It would ensure a first world quality of water, supply safe passage of fish through a connected Darling Barwon River system. The potential for economic development and growth is There is also the potential to bring attention to the lack of water flowing through the very small Western NSW Towns of Wilcannia and Menindee.

[Wilcannia Weir updated fact sheet \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/wilcannia-weir)

Recommendation:

That The Murray Darling Association writes to Federal Water Minister Tanya Plibersek and NSW Water Minister, Rose Jackson, seeking urgent implementation of all recommendations from the NSW Natural Resources Commission in relation to Long Term Average Annual Extraction Limits, per Issues Briefs 1 and 2 (attached).

Objective:

The one consistently missing action in water management across NSW has been the setting of extraction limits, required under the Water Act 2007 (Cth) to protect the water source as well as downstream communities, stock and domestic and town water quality and availability.

In March the Natural Resources Commission released Issues Briefs on consistent issues in water management - notably the lack of Long Term Average Annual Extraction Limits which must be set in each Water Sharing Plan and still have not been.

Unless and until NSW introduce LTAAELs (beginning with areas at high risk of currently being above sustainable limits), the Darling-Baaka will continue to miss out on the low- and moderate floods it used to enjoy and compounding water scarcity issues like recent fish kills, low dissolved oxygen and high nutrient levels (including nitrogen and phosphorous) will continue the demise of the "...ecosystem in crisis" as the Darling-Baaka was described by NRC in 2019.

Without LTAAELs, water management is a guessing game, and one easily skewed against protection of the water source, to the detriment of many important wetlands and especially end of system regions like Wilcannia, Menindee and Wentworth Shire.

Key Arguments:

There can be no way of ensuring NSW is compliant under the Basin Plan without extraction limits, nor can projections be based on best available science - all water management depends on a number describing the limit of extraction which will ensure future sustainability. If that number needs to be reviewed, as it must annually, better planning and surety can be provided to industry, communities and first nations, so water is shared as it should, in a sustainable way into the foreseeable future.

2. Incorporate within water resource plans and water sharing plans the ability to suspend low priority extraction, such as Supplementary, Floodplain and High Flow licences until such time as end of system (Wentworth Darling Junction) flow connectivity and water quality parameters are met;

3. Prioritise end of system water quality and equity by increasing the amount of water meters and including water quality meters along the Barwon-Darling river and;

4. Reexamine the principals of the North West Flow plan to achieve immediate gains in the health of our river systems, given the dire forecast for blue green algae events this Spring and Summer.

[Interim Unregulated Flow Management Plan for the North-West \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/interim-unregulated-flow-management-plan-for-the-north-west)

Note the following from the document drafted in 1992:

The proposals in this Interim Plan will establish:

- target flows along the Barwon-Darling River and priorities for river health and riparian flows;
- a basis for sharing unregulated flows between irrigators and better control of extractions;
- improved monitoring and research programs; and
- an advisory committee and a performance reporting process.
- [Menindee-Fish-Deaths-Report Findings-and-Recommendations.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- [Issue brief 1 - Numeric extraction limits \(2\).pdf](#)

Recommendation:

That the MDA advocates for the Murray Darling Basin Plan 2.0 to address meeting water demands with less water.

Objective:

To assess the stressors of

- Climate Change and the predicted reduction in rainfall
- Extremely variable rainfall predictions, leading to more droughts
- Increasing population growth drawing on MDB water
- Increasing agricultural demand (to meet the 100 billion dollar production target by 2030)

To continue to deliver these water demands

- A minimum 1850 GL/2750 GL to SA and total current water demands across the MDB
- A minimum 450 GL to SA

Or suffer significant impacts on

- Sea water incursion
- Meeting sufficient water for
 - Human needs
 - Cultural demands
 - Environment
 - Agricultural production and
 - Mining

What is this motion trying to achieve?

Consolidate and reinforce previous motions, and seek support from other SA entities, via Regional Development Australia, Murraylands and Riverland LGA, and Southern & Hills LGA, including the reinforcement of the importance of climate change in the review of the basin plan.

To understand the likely MDB flows into the future and how they could be allocated if the same low flows (over the last 20 years) are maintained. Water flows into the River Murray over the past 20 years are nearly half their 20th-century average of 9407 GL per year, down to an average of just 4820 GL per year. In a changing climate, communities throughout the Basin will need continued assistance to adjust to a future with less water.

To ensure that previous MDA motions relating to the MDBA Basin Plan 2.0 are an ongoing priority for river health and continue to reflect the concerns of Basin communities.

Background:

Motions from 2021 and 2022 relating to the Basin Plan review -

2022 *Motion 6.6:*

Effects of sea-level rise. To encompass the effects of sea-level rise on the Lower Murray River, Lakes, and Coorong in their Climate Change research for inclusion in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Review and the updated Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

2021 *Motion 5.8*

2. Identify options for climate change preparedness to help councils adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
3. Prepare for the development and implementation of Basin Plan 2.0.

Background and supporting information:

Refer to Motions 6.6 and 6.8, 2022 MDA AGM Motions.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

There are multiple increasing reasons for reduced water in the Murray Darling Basin, whilst demand is growing, creating even more significant impacts if insufficient Murray Darling water is available. These include the reduced rainfall due to climate change, allowing the effects of predicted sea-level rise to the Lower Murray and making meeting the 450 GI target more complex. All these must be built into the current Basin Plan, extended to 2027, and the Basin Plan 2.0 review.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

The reviewed Basin plan needs to compensate for less rainfall, and guarantee flows through the barrages to push seawater out. Suppose the review does not consider these issues properly. In that case, the downstream Basin communities will be harshly impacted by seawater incursion or not meeting water for environmental, cultural and human needs.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

That the correct water allocation to downstream communities provides surety for future uses.

Recommendation:

MDA to build on the policy and position materials to establish the value proposition of MDA membership, particularly to non-riparian Councils.

Objective:***What is this motion trying to achieve?***

To increase membership of communities and Regions that source their industrial, agricultural, and human needs water from the River Murray (in SA), such as the Adelaide, Eyre Peninsula and Southeast of South Australia.

Who would benefit from this motion?

The MDB communities with full membership of areas outside the MDB provide a better reflection of the water demands on the Murray – Darling. The MDA receives more credibility from the wider catchment and politically.

Background:

Many communities, including those outside the Murray Darling Basin, benefit from the waters of the River Murray; however, they are not members of the MDA, possibly because they do not see themselves as “river communities” and are outside the MDB.

Key Arguments:

Communities, Councils and MDA Regions in South Australia (7 & 8) outside the MDB that source their water from the River Murray are as dependent on the River Murray as any community inside the MDB. Their uses include mining, industrial, agriculture and human needs. Mining, for example, is the biggest user of River Murray water in South Australia, yet maintains no presence, from SA, in the MDA and offers no support to the efforts of the MDA and other Councils to sustain the flows in the River. This supply can be taken for granted due to their distance from the River.

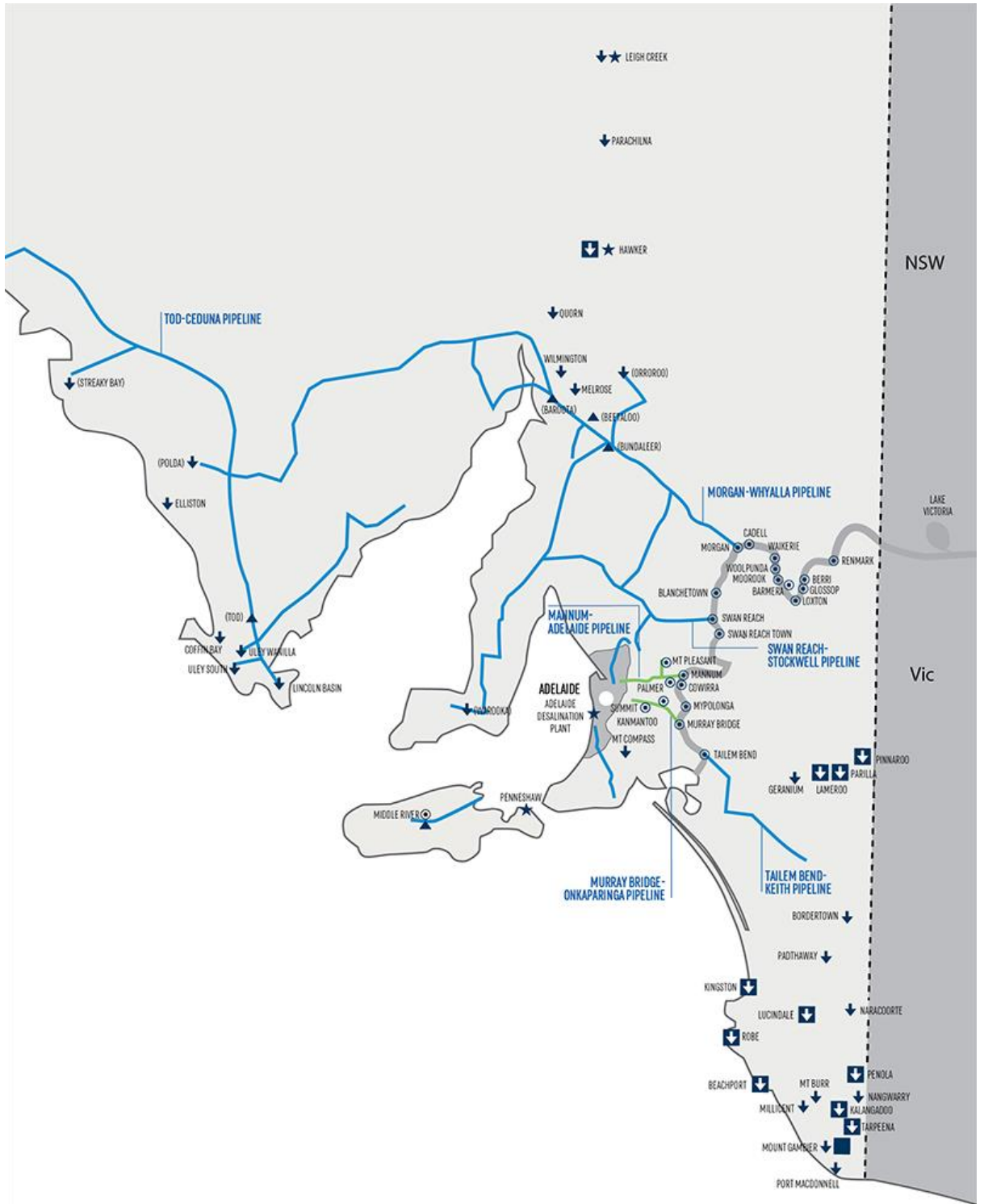
Membership from these multiple groups would help the political efforts to maintain the water supply.

What are the risks if this motion doesn't get up?

The total number of people who rely on River Murray water is much greater than those inside the MDB who contribute most of the political effort to deliver a sustained and working River.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Greater understanding throughout the MDB of the water demands of users and uses than what is limited to within the MDB.



Motion 5.8 REDUCTION OF RIVER WATER RELIANCE FOR NON-RIPARIAN COUNCILS

Region 6

Recommendation:

To release funds to non-riparian Local Governments for engineering solutions to reduce reliance on the Murray-Darling Basin.

For example, the Off-Farm Efficiency Program is only available where a water licence exists, and water can be returned directly to the River. However, many Councils utilise SA Water from the River Murray but still need a water license to use the program.

Objective:

To release funds quarantined for River Murray Licence holders for any user of River Murray water to improve Local Government's ability to reduce reliance on piped, potable, and River Murray water for township use, such as watering reserves and parks and managing stormwater to expand vegetation and biodiversity through Water Sensitive Urban Design and Stormwater capture and reuse schemes.

This motion makes all Australian communities more resilient in the face of Climate Change.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Basin Communities and the Environment.

Background:

The Off-Farm Efficiency Program is closed, with large amounts of untapped money available, with very few funded projects in operation and many mega-litres of water savings to be exploited.

Key Arguments:

Only Local Governments with a water licence can access the Off-Farm Efficiency Program funds to improve water efficiency and reduce their reliance on the River Murray. However, many users who use River Murray water through the SA Water supply (and similar elsewhere) could also use these funds and reduce the draw on the Murray Darling Basin.

What is the current context/issue?

Regional Councils are in an excellent position to improve the quality and quantity of water in the River and their environment. However, they need more resources and knowledge to implement the best options. Both are in much greater abundance in the City Councils.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

The situation remains normal and unchanged, and funding bodies do not appreciate opportunities. Regional Councils should be seen in a different light than City Councils, with a greater ratepayer base, smaller area, and little public land to manage.

Background and supporting information:

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD): Stormwater is rainwater that falls onto roads or roofs and often contains chemicals, sediment, or pollutants. Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is an approach to planning and designing urban areas to use this valuable resource and reduce the harm it causes to our rivers and creeks.

WSUD is expanding significantly in City councils through education, resources, knowledge, and awareness of the impacts of stormwater on rivers and the sea from sediment, chemicals, and nutrients.

WSUD is not widely adopted in regional Councils due to the need to understand the gains that can be made through its implementation. These include reducing pollution to receiving waters, reducing stress on stormwater infrastructure, allowing more vegetation, trees, and biodiversity, and using water where it falls rather than pumping, watering, and managing stormwater where no drainage

infrastructure exists. The other impediment is knowledge by civil infrastructure staff, engineers, and planners to look for opportunities and what works best for a particular situation.

Regional Local Governments need opportunities to learn about WSUD, costs, benefits, applications, and outcomes to use this technology in their townships. Funded training through WaterSensitiveSA and similar groups and on-the-job uses would go a long way to progressing its use. This is the experience of the Rural City of Murray Bridge, which now uses WSUD to increase vegetation, solve troublesome stormwater problems and reduce the draw on the River Murray.

Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse: Harvesting stormwater for reuse through an existing reticulated network is a way of drought-proofing a township during dry periods and expanding the park and reserve network by making more water available throughout the year. These are much larger infrastructure projects requiring significant engineering, treatment, and distribution works and, therefore, need State and Australian government funding to be possible. On this scale, townships can significantly improve aesthetics, cool their urban locations with green areas not supported via existing networks, withstand predicted lower rainfall due to climate change, and directly contribute to achieving the outcomes of the MDB Plan.

Recommendation:

Advocate for support and investment to extend the SA Water Mains Pipeline from Tailem Bend – Keith onto Bordertown to meet domestic water use requirements.

Objective:***What is this motion trying to achieve?***

To guarantee water for human needs, domestic, business, and light industry use in the Bordertown township serving a population of 3000 to be taken from the existing SA Water country towns allocation.

This is not for irrigation or agricultural production.

Background:

The existing Bordertown water supply from six groundwater bores needs to be improved due to ongoing climate variability and reduced rainfall, reducing recharge, and replenishing the freshwater lens that supplies the town. The most reliable alternative water supply solution is an extension of the River Murray Tailem Bend to Keith pipeline, which currently terminates in the Brimbago and Cannawigara localities.

The estimated cost is \$43 million.

Key Arguments:

Ongoing water security for Bordertown is at risk due to declining recharge to the freshwater groundwater lens, which is the current town water supply. Providing this water security solution for Bordertown will match high-value River Murray water to essential human requirements.

What is the current context/issue?

Based on modelling, more reliable and good quality water will be required to supply this community's domestic, business, and industrial use and will restrict ongoing growth.

Long-term reduced rainfall and flow in Tatiara Creek since the mid-1990s is decreasing the extent of recharge to the freshwater lens and increasing salinity levels. The aquifer supplying Bordertown water supply is not replenishing at a rate sufficient to respond to current and future demand levels.

What are the risks if this motion doesn't get up?

The Bordertown township's domestic, business, and industrial water supply may soon decline below the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for human consumption.

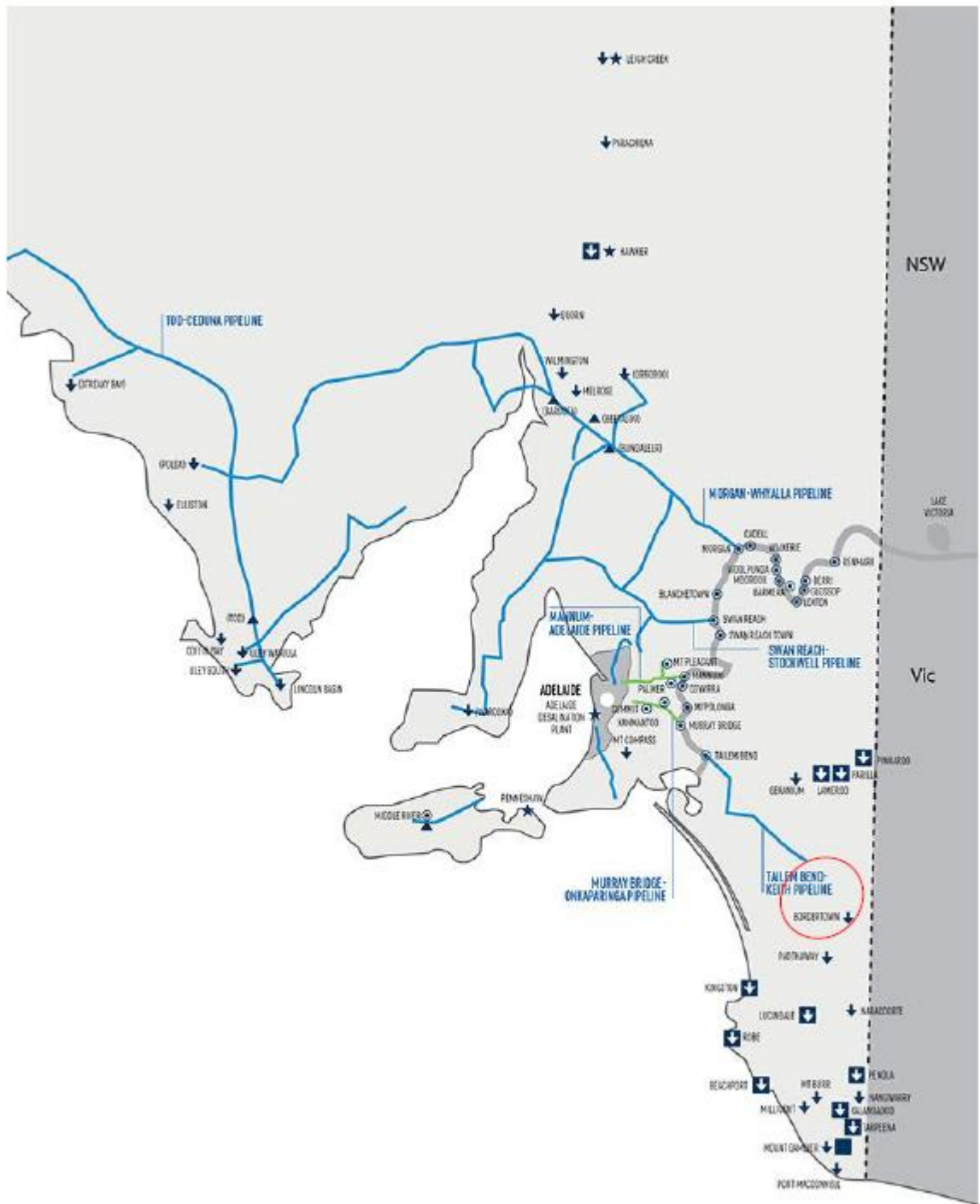
Alternate water supply solutions will not be explored.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Ongoing water security for Bordertown is ensured and will match high-value River Murray water to essential human requirements.

Background and supporting information:

- Tatiara District Council Community Investment Plan, Page 4 – Bordertown Water Supply
- Limestone Coast Landscape Board – Tatiara Water Allocation Plan Review



[SAWater - Our services](#)



Location of proposed pipeline extension

Recommendation:

- a) That the MDA requests the National Water Infrastructure Grid and the Australian Government to fund opportunities for water efficiency using On-Farm Efficiency Funds.
- b) Opportunities to reduce demand on SA Water supplied water derived from the River Murray for Upper Southeast South Australia Stock and Domestic water use.

Objective:

Use the funds available for On-Farm Efficiency programs for users who do not access River Murray directly (using a water licence) but use SA Water potable water derived from the River Murray. As these communities and properties do not own a water licence, they are not eligible for these funds as they do not hold a water licence to trade back to the MDBA.

Who would benefit from this motion?

All Basin Communities and the River.

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

Significant unspent funds are available for water efficiency measures limited to those with water licences. However, many users access River Murray water via SA Water infrastructure, which could add water-saving infrastructure and reduce their demand on SA Water and the River Murray.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

That water loss continues unabated.

Recommendation:

Region 6 Moves that the MDA write to the Federal Minister (and potentially the State Minister) to seek continued funding for the implementation of the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin program and opportunities for increased protection and financing of all Murray Darling Ramsar Wetlands in SA.

Objective:

To continue to improve the health of all Ramsar wetlands, including the Coorong and capitalise on the increased flows over the last 12 months, including but not limited to improvements to the Southern Lagoon and the Murray Mouth.

Background:

Global wetlands account for a third of all carbon sequestered. Without the health of these systems, climate change will worsen and impact the Murray Darling Basin. It makes sense to prioritise all wetlands in the MDB so they can increase carbon storage and mitigate and adapt to climate change. [Coorong Restoration Roadmap | YourSAy](#)

The SA Government completed a community engagement program in June 2023 on the draft Coorong Restoration Roadmap, which will guide how we implement a strategic restoration of the Coorong. The Coorong is a wetland of international importance and one of the most significant waterbird habitats in the Murray-Darling system. Despite its significance, the Coorong is suffering a long-term decline, which the Millennium Drought exacerbated.

To aid the Coorong's return to a desired healthy state, the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin (HCHB) program was developed to improve the Coorong's ecology, knowledge and management and get the region back on track for a healthy future. HCHB is a \$77 million commitment to restore a healthy Coorong, announced by the Australian and South Australian governments in December 2018

Since HCHB was announced in 2018, the program has completed the unprecedented Scientific Trials and Investigations (T&I) project, which identified knowledge gaps and has informed the development of targeted and effective management actions for the Coorong.

Guided by the [International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration](#), the Coorong Restoration Roadmap presents how we will use our key findings and partner with scientists, communities and First Nations to implement a strategic restoration program for the Coorong.

Key Arguments:

[Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Wetland - Fact sheet \(dcceew.gov.au\)](#)

The Murray River, Lower Lakes and Coorong are central to our region's way of life, and we know all too well from lived experience about the direct link between river health and our people's economic, social, and cultural well-being.

The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar wetland is one of Australia's most important wetland areas. Australia designated the site, covering approximately 140,500 ha in South Australia, as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1985. Parts of the Coorong also form the Coorong National Park and Game Reserve.

The site is a unique mosaic of 23 wetland types and provides habitat for nationally threatened species such as the Murray Cod. It contains the threatened Gahnia sedge land ecosystem and part of the endangered Swamps of the Fleurieu Peninsula. The area is used for professional and recreational fishing, camping, boating, walking, wildlife observation and research. There are extensive Aboriginal, historical, and geological sites. The Ngarrindjeri people maintain a close association with the area, and some of the northern islands within the Coorong lagoon are reserved for their use. Most of the edges of Lakes Alexandrina and Albert are used for farming.

Before adopting the Basin Plan, the unsustainable use and management of Basin water resources (combined with severe drought) devastated our community and local environment. The impacts of the Millennium Drought on our region are well documented elsewhere but included low water levels, elevated salinity, vast exposure of acid sulphate soils and localised acidification of surface waters, a problem that continues to have long-standing environmental impacts on our environment, especially the Ramsar wetlands, has needed significant investment from State and Federal Governments to continue to work toward resolving. In addition, what lake water there was became inaccessible or unusable for irrigation, whilst low water levels significantly impacted related industries and tourism.

Utilise wetlands as a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy since global wetlands sequester one-third of global carbon. They act as a buffer for nutrient filtration and are also the key to the food web and ecology of the MDB.

What is the current context/issue?

To ensure funding continues to be suitable to implement the Coorong Restoration Roadmap.

Water flows into the River Murray over the past 20 years are nearly half their 20th-century average of 9407 GL per year, down to an average of just 4820 GL per year. In a changing climate, communities throughout the Basin will need continued assistance to adjust to a future with less water. This is especially true for the Ramsar wetlands at the end of the Murray Darling Basin, which rely on the water delivered through the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Like many other South Australian stakeholders, our concern for the Basin Plan is ‘death by a thousand cuts’. The best available science tells us the benchmark 2750 GL recovery target will be insufficient to return the Ramsar wetlands of the Lakes & Coorong region to a sustainable level of health. Yet, we are facing several decisions in the coming months that are likely to reduce that figure even further – these include the Northern Basin Review, the SDL adjustment process and political pressure not to deliver the 450 GL of special account water.

Climate change will likely result in lower average rainfall patterns and more frequent and extreme droughts. CSIRO predicts that median river flows in the southern Murray Darling Basin will decline 13% by 2030.

Two measurement issues affecting the recovery of water for the environment of particular concern to our region are:

- (1) the impact of irrigation efficiency projects on return flows and hence net stream flows and whether these impacts are being adequately accounted for in determining how much water is being recovered for the environment;
- (2) the way that evaporation losses are accounted for across the Basin. South Australia’s water allocation is determined and measured by river flows at the state border such that evaporative losses within South Australia are already accounted for within that allocation. We understand this is not the case in upstream states, where metering often occurs at the farm gate rather than at the initial off-take point from the river itself. A question for the Commission is how to meter the system to ensure that all diversions and associated evaporative losses are equitably and adequately accounted for.

What are the risks if this motion doesn’t get up?

Concerning environmental changes to date, our region is showing positive signs of ecological recovery due to improved environmental flows and the Coorong Lower Lakes Murray Mouth (CLLMM) Recovery Project outputs. The process of ecological recovery is, however, variable and continuing. Water quality quickly returned to pre-drought levels in Lake Alexandrina and the Goolwa Channel, especially after the recent floods. However, this differs for Lake Albert and the Southern Lagoon of the Coorong, where salinity levels remained significantly higher than the pre-drought average. Since the 2023 flood, salinity levels are only now returning to their average state and allowing some recovery to the Southern Lagoon.

Key species (frogs, fish, water birds and *Ruppia tuberosa*) are only now recovering in abundance and distribution recorded before the Millennium Drought. Monitoring results indicate that continued

recovery depends on future freshwater flows and a management approach that allows for seasonal water level changes in the lakes and additional barrage flows into the Coorong over spring and summer.

Ongoing advocacy of the Murray Darling Association for the end of systems recovery and improvement positively impacts upstream communities. For example, this region is a significant fish habitat and nursery. A healthy system means that upstream fisheries benefit from the fish that generally hatch in the ocean or in the Ramsar wetlands and migrate upstream (and vice versa). Hence, impacts on the Ramsar wetlands directly affect the economy of upstream communities.

Other risks are that the reduced flushing from salt accumulated across the Murray Darling Basin will directly impact the economy and health of all upstream communities.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

The water being returned to the River achieves significant benefits to the river's health and not being wasted.

As identified above, the Ramsar wetlands of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth provide direct economic and health benefits across the Murray Darling Basin. Collectively, our four council districts cover an area of over 18,900 km² and are home to over 60,000 people, with a combined Gross Regional Product of \$2.77bn (as of the year ending June 2016). Agriculture is the region's largest industry, with livestock, cereal crops, vegetables, and grapes generating the greatest output in terms of value. Wool, dairy and broad-acre crops also significantly contribute to our agricultural productivity. Despite upstream misconceptions, water reaching the Ramsar wetlands of the Lower Lakes is productive water, with irrigated agricultural production accounting for approximately 10% of land use across the region. Tourism is another key driver of our regional economy, with food, wine and river-based experiences linking Adelaide with Melbourne via the Southern Ocean Drive and linking the Murray Mouth & Fleurieu Peninsula with upstream states via the Mighty Murray Way.

Recommendation:

Region 6 moves that the MDA advocates to the Australian and State Governments to provide leadership, review levy bank management, and seek advice on what is proposed to implement regular assessment, maintenance, and enhancement of the levy bank system.

Objective:

To ensure Government and Private Levees that protect towns and manage agricultural land for irrigation are assessed periodically (annually/biannually/five years?).

Background:

The 2022/2023 floods highlighted the need for all private and government levees to be assessed as fit for purpose to prevent breaches, as occurred to numerous levees along the Lower Murray.

Key Arguments:

Private levees along the River Murray were not fit for purpose as flood barriers and suffered breaches during the recent floods due to a lack of assessment and maintenance. During the Millennium drought, many levees lost their integrity. They may have yet to be repaired since then, so they are very susceptible to failure during the high flows and extra water pressure.

As of July 2023, all storages are full, and SA is under a High Flow Advice (>40 GI/day). Whilst flows were lower than before the recent floods, the high river was caused by one significant event in November that simultaneously flooded several Victorian Rivers.

What is the current context/issue?

Failure of the levees caused unnecessary flooding of land that took many months to dry out and then repair the levees for the future.

Private and public levees should be maintained to an acceptable standard when no risk exists.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

That river communities, relying on levees, will again be disadvantaged, and threatened if high river levels arrive.

Recommendation:

The MDA calls on the State and Commonwealth Governments to provide leadership with quantifying the impact, management planning and amelioration fund to address riverbank slumping and river bank undercutting in impacted regions.

Objective:

Murray Darling Basin communities require a Government Agency to take responsibility for the issues of riverbank slumping (SA) and riverbank undercutting (Vic).

To ensure riverine Local Governments and land managers adjacent to Rivers impacted by riverbank slumping and riverbank undercutting receive adequate support to quantify the impact, access quality technical information to inform management actions and access an amelioration fund to implement these actions.

A predictive risk assessment tool to understand the likelihood of future riverbank failure in conjunction with developing a management process to work through the best practice assessment, monitoring, and management of these areas.

Background:

Numerous mapped areas along the Lower River Murray are vulnerable to Riverbank Slumping, with devastating consequences during and since the Millennium Drought. The recent floods and predicted high flows are expected to increase riverbank slumping and undercutting. This damage may only become more apparent when river levels drop. Riverbank slumping into rivers can occur with no warning.

Riverbank slumping and undercutting impact public and private land and public facilities, private infrastructure, farmland, businesses, riverine management, habitat, the environment, and water quality.

In the Lower Murray region of South Australia, the riverbank as we know it is not the natural bank. The banks of the river are only 100 years old and were created when the lock/weir/barrage system was constructed. As such, some banks are not benefiting from thousands of years of consolidation. Some slumping occurs on human-constructed levies used to reclaim flood plains. These levees are constructed with the right intentions; however, geotechnical testing and correct compaction techniques cannot be verified.

In this case, slumping is simply the natural environment trying to reach an equilibrium. In the Upper reaches of the River Murray tributaries (Campaspe, Loddon, Broken and Goulbourn Rivers), Inter Valley Water Transfers undercut the riverbanks, causing the bank to fall into the fast-flowing water, damaging vegetation and habitat and unnaturally widening the Rivers.

Key Arguments:

Due to the recent events of the Millennium Drought and the 2022 – 2023 floods, riverbank slumping and undercutting are becoming increasingly common. The full impact and prevalence are not yet quantified.

Murray Darling Basin communities require a Government Agency to take responsibility for the issues of riverbank slumping and undercutting to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach.

A risk management and predictive tool to understand the likelihood of future riverbank failure in conjunction with developing a management process to work through the best practice assessment, monitoring, and management of these areas.

From a long-term view, riverine communities require support, technical advice, and funding assistance to adequately prepare these vulnerable riverine zones for future flood and drought events to be resilient to future damage.

What is the current context/issue?

Riverbank slumping and undercutting often occur in rural local government areas with low populations and rates-based income. This damage is anticipated and is yet to be factored into public or private land managers' long-term financial planning or insurance requirements. Damage impacts roads and public and private infrastructure, requiring technical engineering advice and solutions to mitigate and repair this damage.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

Without assistance with damage quantification, management actions and funding support, river communities, economies and businesses will continue to be impacted by future drought/flood cycles, leading to riverbank slumping and undercutting.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

River communities, economies, and businesses will be informed with a resilient position to protect riverbanks and adjacent infrastructure with the technical expertise to anticipate, assess and manage future riverbank slumping and undercutting occurrences.

Background and supporting information:

Lower Reaches River Murray Stability Risk Management Coorong District Council – Sinclair Knight Merz
Riverbank Collapse Hazard, Lower Reaches River Murray Stability Risk Management – Jacobs SKM

Objectives

Identification of:

- A Government Agency to take responsibility for the issues of riverbank slumping and riverbank undercutting.

Development of:

- A predictive tool to understand the likelihood of future riverbank failure.
- A management process to work through best practice assessment, monitoring and managing these areas.
- An amelioration fund to address riverbank slumping and riverbank undercutting and protect areas identified at risk of these forms of river bank failure.

Recommendation:

The MDA calls on the Federal Government to implement all other European Carp Control measures and develop a second plan to manage Carp.

Region 6 Moves that the MDA write to the Federal Minister

- a) to seek advice on whether any non-biological European Carp Control measures could be implemented in the Lower Murray region and
- b) to develop and deliver a Community-level Education Program in the Lower Murray for ethical and responsible European Carp fishing and removal and
- c) to provide funds for Local Councils to install fishing infrastructure and fish disposal methods in their local communities.

Objective:

That the Australian Government takes an active approach to Carp management and implements alternative plans and control measures for managing Carp numbers, likely to increase post-flood, rather than waiting for the National Carp Control Plan to be ratified or rejected.

2021 Motion: The Murray Darling Association call on Basin Governments to initiate, fund and implement further research and development, adoption, and commercialisations into alternative carp mitigation/controls to the proposed Cyprinid Herpesvirus 3.

This benefits all Basin communities and the Environment.

Background:

From 2021 AGM: Carp's bulk harvest could support many market potentials, including but not limited to fertiliser, protein, human consumption, and international export. There is untapped export demand for our virus-free fish, with Carp considered a normal part of the diet in many countries across Europe and Asia.

By contrast, Carp as a table fish carries an unwarranted stigma in Australia. However, the Australian pallet is changing and targeted marketing and promoting Carp for human consumption, supported by appropriate preparation methods (e.g. catch and cooking techniques, pate', sausage rolls, fish patties, Mornay, etc.), would support a burgeoning domestic demand. Recreational anglers do not typically target carp, which can be a fantastic sport fish, a sector that could help support regional economies.

Could more work be done around community-level carp removal, education, disposal, and water-side fishing infrastructure and explore any viable commercial-level carp harvesting and disposal methods?

Key Arguments:

2021

The impact of the European Carp on Australia's river systems, including the Murray Darling Basin, is well documented, with the Federal Government implementing the National Carp Control Program in 2016. However, the Terms of Reference restricted the mitigation measures to the Cyprinid Herpes virus 3 with a follow-up of Daughterless Carp (genetic mitigation).

The Federal Government has spent millions of dollars researching its Carp Control Program, with little practical impact on the rivers and waterways. Whilst the government consternates its decision to release the Virus, hundreds of tonnes of Carp could be removed from the rivers and bred through proven practical measures. Such as the introduction of "Daughterless Carp" to reduce the reproduction rate and increase the number of Carp Separation Cages at all river barriers, such as weirs and regulators.

The Williams' Carp Separation Cage (CSC Separation Cage) exploits the Carp's natural behaviour to migrate upstream and its willingness to jump small waterfalls, unlike our native fish. It is in use at the Blanchetown weir with great success following a trial period when it removed 300 tonnes of Carp. It now averages 80-100 t annually, allowing our native fish to continue upstream through Fishways. NSW DPI followed, using the CSC in several key locations, which supports a niche fertiliser industry with the potential to be replicated and scaled.

There are multiple circular economic opportunities also about Carp.

What is the current context/issue?

2023

After completing the remaining research studies in 2022, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation submitted the National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) – an extensive and comprehensive body of work including 19 peer-reviewed research papers, nine technical papers and five further investigation studies.

The delivery of the NCCP is the initial stage of the process to consider the feasibility of any future release of the virus as a biocontrol agent for carp. All governments are considering the NCCP as part of an initial decision on whether to proceed with the biological release program. This is expected to take some time.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/pest-animals-and-weeds/national-carp-control-plan>

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

This motion seeks to implement other Carp control measures until the introduction of the virus.

There is considerable research on the National Carp Control Plan website, including biomass, commercial exploitation, clean-up and disposal, virus impacts, and water quality impacts. However, the NCCP does not include the use of cages, traps, or daughterless carp, so these options are available and should be exploited.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

The NCCP and associated research include economic and environmental analysis on the outcomes of removing carp en-masse. Sudden removal (via the virus) could result in some loss of a food supply in the short term until local species recover.

Technical Paper 5 and NCCP research project 13 address potential socio-economic impacts on the native fish aquaculture industry, commercial carp fishers, recreational fishers, tourism, koi hobbyists and businesses, and possible mitigation measures in detail.

Recommendation:

That the MDA Board review the Constitution for fairness, equity, good governance and to support ongoing financial sustainability.

Objective:

Strategic Plan 2020-25: Pillar 4: Corporate Development

4.1.6 "Our Governance Framework is robust and reflects and supports our organisation's processes and accountabilities.

4.2.1 "Membership revenues are sufficient to fund recurrent business"

Given the important role and responsibility the MDA has over the next few years as the Basin Plan is reviewed, it is timely to ensure the governance framework is robust and fit for purpose, which should take the form of an all-encompassing root and branch review of:

The Constitution

Membership Policy

Membership Fees - Membership Application Form

Membership Procedure - Membership Code (the process to receive, consider and approve membership applications)

Life Members

Regional Boundary Review (viz Region 10 / 10A and non-participatory Regions)

Including the question over whether there should be a Non-Riparian Membership Discount for Councils in the Basin Supply Network (but not located on/near a Basin watercourse).

Background:

Some examples to support the review are:

- A private corporation of any size can join for \$350 (there are two large water utility members)
- Private members from a region may not act in the best interest of the member region.

State and Federal Members of Parliament, though important stakeholders, are elected to distinct tiers of government. If the MDA is a local government representative body, why are elected Members of State and Federal Parliament's eligible for both membership and voting rights? There is a potential risk of providing a platform for an unfair level of political influence over the MDA though there is no suggestion that has to date occurred. (There are two MP individual members)

Consideration should be given to certain elected positions and election procedures, for example, Sec 8(2)(b) of the Constitution [Composition of the Board] refers to only one Vice President, where consideration could be given to electing a Vice President from the Northern Basin and one from the Southern Basin at the MDA Board level.

Section 20 of the Constitution relating to Life Members lacks detail in terms of how many Life Members may be nominated by a Region per year. Given the accompanying voting rights at the Region and National level a limit on the number of Life Members a Region/Member can nominate annually should be considered.

It is Region 6's view that, if supported, such a review of the governance framework, organisational structure and membership (including fee structure) would logically take place first and before resources were committed to recruitment of new members.

Recommendation:

That the Murray Darling Association write to the Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP:

- 1. Seeking an explanation of the methodology governing “Unregulated Flows” in the Murray-Darling Basin.**
- 2. Seeking an explanation as to why “Unregulated Flows” that remain in the River system are not recognised as “Environmental Flows.”**
- 3. Requesting that the methodology governing “Unregulated Flows” be amended such that flows that remain in the River System during unregulated flow periods be measured and recorded as “Environmental Flows.”**

Key Arguments:

The wet weather period during 2020/22 was a multi-year La Nina event which resulted in enormous flows through the Murray-Darling Basin. Significant periods of time were declared as “Unregulated Flows.” During periods of “Unregulated Flows,” consumptive users are authorised to extract water from the river system without that water being charged against their licence allocation.

Likewise, any “Unregulated Flow” water that flows down the river system during the same period is not charged against the “Environmental Water” allocation.

In reality, only a very small proportion of “Unregulated Flows” is extracted by consumptive users during such events therefore the vast majority of the water stays within the river system and eventually passes through the system and out to sea.

These flows through to the sea provide substantial environmental benefits but are not currently charged or debited against the environmental water account/allocation.

This Motion seeks to have the methodology for “Unregulated Flows” amended to require water that remains in the river system to be charged against the environmental water account/allocation.

Recommendation:

MDA Region 9 moves that the MDA advocates to Federal and State Governments that local councils, as elected representative of local communities and stewards of local social, economic, and environmental health and wellbeing, be routinely included in all dialogue and planning related to the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in their areas, including government dialogue with third parties, and that this engagement be timely, transparent, authentic, and meaningful.

Objective:

The motion aims to ensure that local councils are included from the get-go in ALL discussions about Basin Plan projects in their areas, including discussions between state of federal governments and third parties, such as irrigation companies, and that these discussions are undertaken in a spirit of co-operation, collaboration, openness, and full transparency.

Who would benefit from this motion?

The beneficiaries will be local communities, local economies and local environments as councils have a wide mandate to steward the triple bottom line, as opposed to some parties whose drivers can be narrow and often led by self-interest.

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

Federal and State Government and Irrigation Companies are often working in isolation with projects and initiatives and are not sharing the information about these proposals with other stakeholders including local government.

This issue therefore heightens concern over the lack of opportunity and timeliness for local communities and local councils to receive and give information or feedback and be involved in discussion around proposed water savings projects.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

There will continue to be a lack of transparency, communication, and co-operation in terms of water savings projects and potential negative effects from decisions that may in turn badly impact communities.

Further, there will be lost opportunities to collaborate early to hone ideas so that outcomes are genuinely a win-win for all concerned, including the community, the economy, and the environment.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

A more collaborative, open, and transparent way forward for discussing, understanding, and assessing water savings projects rather than any one stakeholder influencing decisions that aren't necessarily in the best interests of the greater good.

Recommendation:

That MDA lobby respective Governments to report publicly on a quarterly basis progress to finalise and submit SDLAM projects to appropriate agencies for certification and implementation as per the deadline as determined by the Australian Government Minister for Water.

Objective:

Regular reporting of progress of projects.

Who would benefit from this motion?

The whole region including the triple bottom line framework of economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

Concern that SDLAM projects are not being adequately or properly funded and that current understanding is that approved projects are well behind in being completed.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

There will be a continuation of a lack of reporting on projects regardless of the deadline.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Regions will have a far better understanding of the progress of programs and what needs to be undertaken to achieve completion within the deadlines.

Recommendation:

MDA Region 9, being concerned about implications for Basin communities in regional and rural Australia, moves that the MDA responds to Water Amendment Bill (Restoring Our Rivers Bill – August 2023) by advocating to the Minister, Parliamentarians, Murray Darling Basin Board and executive, the Senate and the Department of Climate Change, Environment and Water, that it:

- Supports the timeframe extensions for the SDLAM projects until 31 Dec 2026 and the States ability to add new projects to the suit of packages to achieve the 605GL “downwater”.
- Opposes an end of the cap on buybacks (being 1500GL),
- Rejects strongly the shift from endeavouring to recover the 450GL “upwater” where it makes sense to a commitment to fully recover the 450GL, including through buybacks.
- Is concerned by the shift to ‘minimising social economic impacts’ from what was previously a commitment to full socio-economic neutrality testing, and the effects this may have on agriculture, irrigation, and communities,
- Calls for an urgent reconciliation of the latest science, global best practice, environmental achievements, and new ideas to inform an intelligent review of the Basin Plan in collaboration with local communities.
- Calls for a renewed focus on actions that will provide the greatest environmental returns for rivers.

Objective:***What is your Motion trying to achieve?***

The Bill as it stands seriously risks taking Basin Communities to an economic tipping point from which they will never recover and, arguably, for no good reason other than chasing recovery targets modelled over 10 years ago that may not even be relevant or required today. The consequences to the nation, let alone local communities, has not been fully/properly investigated and understood. It would be irresponsible to change legislation to the extent proposed without first doing a comprehensive review of the Plan informed by the latest science (environmental, social, economic, cultural) and a full assessment of the range of alternative levers that could contribute to healthier river systems (beyond just adding water).

The motion does however support the extension in time for the delivery of SDLAM projects and the inclusion of new projects.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Basin communities, including communities that are significant contributors to Australia’s farming sector / food security and that support associated value adding industries (many of which are major export earners for the nation).

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

- A. The Bill effectively removes the cap on water buybacks, commits fully to recovering the 450ML of “upwater”, including through buybacks, and removes the socio-economic neutrality testing in favour of ‘minimising’ economic impacts by way of “funding for community adjustment assistance”. These one-off “adjustment assistance” actions by governments are tokenistic at best and fail to recognise the considerable and perpetual contribution of agriculture and manufacturing to regional and national economies. “Adjustment assistance” is never ongoing and is a serious risk to local economies, especially in irrigation communities of which there are many across the Basin states. It should not be forgotten that water recovery has already cost an estimated 10,000 jobs across Basin communities and it would be foolish of Basin communities to sit by and watch while further jobs are eroded.

It is noted that the Basin Plan has already recovered 2100GL for the environment (4 Sydney Harbours) and that the CEWH and EWAGs across the Basin have recognised and celebrated many environmental success stories as a result of increased environmental watering. Presenting the Plan as a failure to date is plain wrong – there is more to celebrate than criticise. Today, towns, industries and agriculture across the Basin only access 28% of inflows, meaning what is left for the environment is well within globally accepted standards for water diversions. There is also no point in recovering further water when delivery of the current volumes of environmental water remains constrained. It's important to not act rashly but instead take a considered and intelligent approach to further policy or legislative change, ideally via a full review of the Basin Plan done in genuinely consultation with all stakeholders.

- B. The Bill chases water recover numbers based on 10-year-old models and ignores the latest science about what will truly help rivers recover the most. The Bill ignores the existing inability of the CEWH to use what water it already has and doggedly chases water recovery for the environment without properly exploring the economic impacts on local communities and the nation. There are many other ways to achieve healthier rivers that need priority attention – these include:
- Improved river operations that could free up more discretionary water for the environment.
 - Improved recognition of the effects of private partnerships, such as private property wetlands (that are estimated to be 93% of wetlands) and private watering arrangements with the CEWH.
 - Improved fish programs including introduction of trialled carp herpes to address degradation of in-stream habitat; fish ladders / fish passage projects at weirs such as Menindee, Balranald, and Mildura; as well as expanded fish screening programs.
 - Further modernisation programs in irrigation districts (including private districts)
 - Investigating alternative (temporary) market solutions for environmental water when absolutely necessary (instead of permanently depleting the consumptive pool)
 - Investigating local community / council environmental programs using available water and wastewater
- C. There are already several alternatives projects being proposed to help achieve sustainable diversion adjustment targets – such as the Murrumbidgee Optimisation Program and Reconnected (Murray) Floodplains Project. It is good that the legislation change will open up an opportunity for their inclusion instead of restricting projects to those tabled some years ago.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

- A) Farmers in distress (such as wine grape farmers in 2023) will immediately sell their water to the government for a premium rate, reducing the amount of water available in the productive pool. This will negatively impact farming outputs as well as the viability of irrigation schemes and value adding processing industries, many of which are major employers and major contributors to Australian export earnings.
- B) Buybacks will prevail at the expense of local communities and the Australian economy, and opportunities for win-win outcomes that deliver healthier rivers using alternative strategies to water recovery will have been lost.
- C) Closing the door to new options to achieve Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment projects will increase the risk of further buybacks, reducing water availability in the consumptive pool and, ultimately, restricting Australia's ability to achieve its agricultural strategic goals.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Communities across the Basin won't be blindsided by quick fix populist legislation that is very likely to leave them economically distressed — the rhetoric of 'minimising economic impacts' is vastly different to genuinely ensuring socio-economic neutrality. If this motion gets up and is successfully executed, Basin communities will benefit from intelligent, properly informed policy that seeks win-win outcomes focussed on the real goals (healthy rivers and a healthy environment), not the means (water recovery / buybacks). Importantly, Basin communities will be partners in co-creating any new legislation so that its implications are thoroughly understood and embraced by all concerned before being enshrined in legislation.

Recommendation:

MDA Region 9, being concerned about implications for Basin communities in regional and rural Australia, moves that the MDA responds to Water Amendment Bill (Restoring Our Rivers Bill – August 2023) by advocating to the Minister, Parliamentarians, Murray Darling Basin Board and executive, the Senate and the Department of Climate Change, Environment and Water, that it:

- Supports the timeframe extensions for the SDLAM projects until 31 Dec 2026 and the States ability to add new projects to the suit of packages to achieve the 605GL “downwater”.
- Opposes an end of the cap on buybacks (being 1500GL),
- Rejects strongly the shift from endeavouring to recover the 450GL “upwater” where it makes sense to a commitment to fully recover the 450GL, including through buybacks.
- Is concerned by the shift to ‘minimising social economic impacts’ from what was previously a commitment to full socio-economic neutrality testing, and the effects this may have on agriculture, irrigation, and communities,
- Calls for an urgent reconciliation of the latest science, global best practice, environmental achievements, and new ideas to inform an intelligent review of the Basin Plan in collaboration with local communities.
- Calls for a renewed focus on actions that will provide the greatest environmental returns for rivers.

Objective:***What is your Motion trying to achieve?***

The Bill as it stands seriously risks taking Basin Communities to an economic tipping point from which they will never recover and, arguably, for no good reason other than chasing recovery targets modelled over 10 years ago that may not even be relevant or required today. The consequences to the nation, let alone local communities, has not been fully/properly investigated and understood. It would be irresponsible to change legislation to the extent proposed without first doing a comprehensive review of the Plan informed by the latest science (environmental, social, economic, cultural) and a full assessment of the range of alternative levers that could contribute to healthier river systems (beyond just adding water).

The motion does however support the extension in time for the delivery of SDLAM projects and the inclusion of new projects.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Basin communities, including communities that are significant contributors to Australia’s farming sector/food security and that support associated value adding industries (many of which are major export earners for the nation).

Key Arguments:***What is the current context/issue?***

Federal and State Government and Irrigation Companies are often working in isolation with projects and initiatives and are not sharing the information about these proposals with other stakeholders including local government.

This issue therefore heightens concern over the lack of opportunity and timeliness for local communities and local councils to receive and give information or feedback and be involved in discussion around proposed water savings projects.

What are the risks of this motion doesn’t get up?

There will continue to be a lack of transparency, communication, and co-operation in terms of water savings projects and potential negative effects from decisions that may in turn badly impact communities.

Further, there will be lost opportunities to collaborate early to hone ideas so that outcomes are genuinely a win-win for all concerned, including the community, the economy, and the environment.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

A more collaborative, open, and transparent way forward for discussing, understanding and assessing water savings projects rather than any one stakeholder influencing decisions that aren't necessarily in the best interests of the greater good.

Recommendation:**That the MDA call on:**

- 1. The Federal Water Minister the Hon Tanya Plibersek to engage a suitably qualified third party to undertake a review of the effect of the current Basin Plan water recovery on basin communities.**
- 2. The review must quantify the social impact caused by population loss, the economic impact created through reduced access to water and the environmental benefit of the recovered water, and**
- 3. The report must be made available to the public prior to continued community consultation on the next version of the basin plan.**
- 4. The Minister halt all planned actions to recover the 450GL of water under the basin plan.**

Objective:

The aim of this motion is simply to quantify the economic and social affect the Basin Plan has had on basin communities before any future versions of a Basin Plan are debated and or endorsed.

Key Arguments:

Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Implementation Review was announced on 2 May 2023.

Terms of reference

The Federal Treasurer requested that the Productivity Commission undertake an inquiry into the effectiveness of the implementation of the Basin Plan 2012 and water resource plans.

Scope of the inquiry

In accordance with the provisions of Part 3 of the Water Act, the Commission is to report on the matter of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Basin Plan and water resource plans for the five-year period ending 19 December 2023.

In undertaking the inquiry, the Productivity Commission should assess the progress towards implementing the Basin Plan, including the:

- extent to which the Basin Plan is on track to be delivered within statutory timeframes,
- the likelihood and extent to which activities and arrangements currently in place will ensure that these provisions and timeframes will be met,
- the effectiveness of reforms to address previous Productivity Commission recommendations, including the Joint Basin government response to the Productivity Commission inquiry report: Murray–Darling Basin Plan: Five-year Assessment (2019), and
- the extent to which the current framework for implementing the Basin Plan, including the framework for monitoring, reporting, and evaluation, is likely to be effective in supporting implementation of the Basin Plan.

The impact on regional communities must be assessed before any progress on any future versions of the Basin Plan is undertaken.

The implementation review is a start; however, it falls short of identifying impacts on Basin communities, communities that have realised dramatic loss of population, GRP and a prosperous future.

Recommendation:

That the MDA call on the NSW Water Minister to amend legislation that will ensure protections are in place for Regional Water Utilities from privatisation, as recently resolved and legislation amended for Sydney Water and Hunter Water.

Objective:

That the NSW Government provides the same protections in legislation against potential privatisation of Regional Water and Sewer Utilities as recently passed legislation in the NSW Parliament that amended NSW Constitution to provide such protections to Sydney Water and Hunter Water.

Key Arguments:

The NSW Government successfully debated in both houses of parliament for change that enshrined Sydney Water and Hunter Water in the NSW Constitution to ensure they stay publicly owned; however there is no mention of local government in the proposed amendments and protection of our Water and Sewer Utilities.

Recent survey results by Country Mayors Association of NSW clearly showed that it is critical that water remains in the hands of Regional, Rural and Remote communities, through local government, they strongly and respectfully called on the NSW State Government to include the protection of Regional water and sewer assets in the NSW Constitution and Region 11 is seeking the Murray Darling Association's support to achieve these protections.

Motion 5.23 FUNDING COMMITMENT FOR SAFE AND SECURE WATER PROGRAMS

Region 11

Recommendation:

That the MDA call on the NSW Government to commit further funding of \$250 million per annum for safe and secure water programs, in particular safe and secure water for critical human needs and food and fibre production.

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

The NSW Safe and Secure Water Program was established in 2017 with a \$1 Billion funding commitment for Regional Infrastructure by the NSW Coalition Government, that funding was a commitment of \$200 Million per annum that was made available to Local Government in Regional NSW for the co-funding of eligible water and sewer projects to improve public health, water secure, environmental outcomes and/or social benefits.

Funding for this program will soon come to an end and a commitment from the newly elected NSW Government needs to be committed through to 2027.

Key Arguments:

The NSW Safe and Secure Water program has become a critical funding program for Regional, Rural and Remote communities to supplement the limited funds available within Local Government to provide the critical infrastructure upgrades to ensure the needs of our growing communities are met.

In recent years Regional NSW has seen significant increase in population due to migration from Metropolitan and outer metropolitan centres, and additionally a significant increase in immigration allowance by the Federal Government.

The Financial constraints on Local Government in NSW has never been greater than today, without the ongoing financial support from the NSW Government, Regional NSW will not be in the position to take advantage of the growth opportunities and that in turn will have a negative impact on the state of NSW.



78th Annual General Meeting MINUTES

Time: 3:30pm

Date: Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Location: Albury Entertainment Centre, 525 Swift Street, Albury NSW

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

Contents

1.	Welcome	3
1.1	Welcome Address	3
2.	Attendance.....	3
2.1	Present	3
2.2	Apologies.....	4
2.3	Declarations of Interest.....	4
3.	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	5
4.	2021 - 2022 Annual Report and Financial Statements	5
5.	Life Member Nomination – Paul Maytom.....	5
6.	Motions on Notice.....	6
Motion 6.1	ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT	6
Motion 6.2	MORATORIUM ON AGRICULTURAL & HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS	8
Motion 6.3	MENINDEE LAKES – RAMSAR SITE	9
Motion 6.4	FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING VOLUME CAP	10
Motion 6.5	DRAFT WESTERN REGIONAL WATER STRATEGY CONSULTATION	11
Motion 6.6	EFFECTS OF SEA-LEVEL RISE	13
Motion 6.7	GREATER FIRST NATIONS INVOLVEMENT	16
Motion 6.8	PROGRESS REPORTING ON THE 450GL RECOVERY PROGRAM	17
Motion 6.9	NSW WATER RESOURCE PLANS	18
Motion 6.10	CIRCULAR ECONOMIC PROJECT FUNDING.....	20
Motion 6.11	CLARIFICATION OF ANNUAL WATER ALLOCATION METHODOLOGY	21
Motion 6.12	“BENEFIT COST RATIO” REQUIREMENTS	22
Motion 6.13	OWNERSHIP AND ACCESS TO WATER FOR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PURPOSES FOR THE BASIN’S INDIGENOUS NATIONS	23
Motion 6.14	EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR MANAGED AQUIFER RECHARGE	25
Motion 6.15	THE JOHN KELL PROPOSAL.....	26

1. Welcome

1.1 Welcome Address

Cr David Thurley, OAM

MDA National President

2. Attendance

2.1 Present

Delegate	Council	Region
Cr David Thurley	AlburyCity Council	Region 1
Cr Geoff Dobson	Greater Shepparton City Council	Region 2
Cr Jason Modica	Mildura Rural City Council	Region 4
Cr Andrew Kassebaum	Berri-Barmera Council	Region 5
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr Andrew Tilley	City of Mitcham	Region 7
Cr Glen Andrezza	Griffith City Council	Region 9
Mayor Craig Davies	Narromine Council	Region 10A
Mayor Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Peter George	M&S Group	Interim Treasurer
CEO Mark Lamb	MDA	Staff
Tim Phillips	MDA, Comms & Engagement Officer	Staff
Sharon Terry	Greater Shepparton City Council	Region 2
Sally Hughes	Federation Council	Region 2
Cr Rachele Henson	Federation Council	Region 2
Cr Peter Mansfield	Moira Shire Council	Region 2
Ron McCalman	Murray Irrigation	Region 2
Michael Pisasale	Murray Irrigation	Region 2
Gabrielle Cusack	Murray Irrigation	Region 2
Michael Colreavy	Balranald Shire Council, Administrator	Region 4
Mayor Tim Elstone	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Daniel Linklater	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Emily Guerin	Broken Hill Council	Region 4
Cr Robert Stewart	Central Darling Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Margaret Howie	Renmark-Paranga Council	Region 5
Heather Barclay	Rural City of Murry Bridge	Region 6
Stephen Packer	Rural City of Murray Bridge	Region 6
Mayor Brenton Lewis	Rural City of Murray Bridge	Region 6
Carol Muzyk	Region Secretariat	Region 6
Cr Airlie Keen	Rural City of Murray Bridge	Region 6

CEO Bridget Mather	Coorong District Council	Region 6
Cr Michael Scott	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
CEO Nigel Morris	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Phillip Moore	Life Member	Region 6
Lynda Yates	Individual Member	Region 7
Cr Robin Coleman	City of Tea Tree Gully	Region 7
Peter Shepherd	Individual Member	Region 7
CEO Brett Stonestreet	Griffith City Council	Region 9
Cr Jenny Clarke	Narrandera Shire Council	Region 9
Cr Jackie Kruger	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr George Weston	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Paul Maytom	Life Member	Region 9
Cr Geoff Chapman	Hay Shire Council	Region 9
Cr John Scarce	Murrumbidgee Shire Council	Region 9
Bede Spannagle	Riverina Water County Council	Region 9
Cr Dennis Brady	Lachlan Shire Council	Region 10
Cr Peter Wright	Cowra Shire Council	Region 10
Richard Jane	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Cr Greg Sauer	Tenterfield Shire Council	Region 11
Cr Robert Hoddle	Gunnedah Shire Council	Region 11
Matthew Magin	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12

2.2 Apologies

Delegate	Council	Region
Cr Aaron Nicholls	Federation Council	Region 2
Director Thornton Harfield	City of Tea Tree Gully	Region 7
Bede Mecham	Life Member	Region 9
Mayor Phyllis Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Region 10
Mayor Jamie Chaffey	Gunnedah Shire Council	Region 11
Tony Pasin MP	Federal member for Barker	

2.3 Declarations of Interest

M Rebeck declared a perceived Conflict of Interest with item 6.10, noted that they would not vote on this motion.

3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

(M Rebbeck / A Tilley)

That the minutes of 77th MDA Annual General Meeting held on 19 May 2021 be accepted as an accurate record.

CARRIED

4. 2021 - 2022 Annual Report and Financial Statements

The Interim Treasurer provided the 2021 – 2022 Annual Reports and Financial Statements for review.

(P George / A Tilley)

That the 2021 – 2022 Annual report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2022 be received and noted.

CARRIED

5. Life Member Nomination – Paul Maytom

D Thurley noted that P Maytom had been a member of Leeton Shire Council for 36 years and Mayor for 16 years. P Maytom took every opportunity to promote membership of the MDA and encouraged greater Water Literacy.

D Thurley noted that P Maytom was an accomplished diplomat, providing a lead voice when seated at a table with peak bodies and dignitaries.

That the Life Membership nomination for Paul Maytom, former Region 9 Chair be approved.

CARRIED

6. Motions on Notice

Motion 6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT

C Davies noted that the theme had generally been to work together in the Basin, noted concern where the water was going to come from. Indicated that the Basin had a water sharing plan, that it was up to the government to decide this and that the MDA should leave it at that. C Davies noted that this motion would affect the Northern Basin more than the Southern Basin.

M Rebbeck noted that the extra water for the environmental account was something that Region 6 spoke of frequently. Noted that Region 6 had a southern lagoon that was still dead, even after additional funding sourced from the Government. M Rebbeck expressed that additional water was needed to ensure that the environment survived.

J Kruger noted a support for healthy rivers and a healthy Basin. Indicated that this motion needed additional background information before being able to support this motion, citing lack of information of flow-on effects on different regions. J Kruger noted that this motion needed more depth of information before it could be supported

Mildura Rural City Council, Region 4

That the Murray Darling Association commend the Federal Government, the Basin States, and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to make a commitment based on science to increase the volume of water in the environmental account. With the intent of rejuvenating the health of waterways in Murray Darling Barka Basin in the driest and drought years. Considering system intake variability ephemerality and climate change.

LOST

Objective:

To open discussion on the extraordinary growth of water reliant crops in the Murray Darling Barka Basin. To critique this growth following the intent of the Water Act of 2007 and its premise to protect, preserve, and rejuvenate the waterways in the Murray Darling Barka Basin.

An overall environmental and ecological benefit would initially occur. Community and amenity benefit with an overall goal of sustainable waterways coexisting with healthy working Rivers and sustainable horticulture and agriculture.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

From 1997 to 2018, the irrigable area in the Mallee catchment increased by 40,825 hectares, from 40,325 hectares to 81,150 hectares. The pace of development has continued to increase since this report was completed. **In 2000, Australia had approximately 3,546 hectares (ha) of almond tree plantations. By 2019, the rapid expansion of this industry had increased almond-growing land to 53,014 ha – a 900% rise in less than 20 years.**

The fact that much of this expansion has occurred in a short time, particularly within the highly compromised Murray–Darling Basin, invites questions about the water needs of permanent plantings and their role in the multiple pressures on inland water and the environment in Australia more widely.

The underlying need for a reliable supply of water sees permanent plantings along river systems facing increasing pressure from prolonged dry periods despite their substantial water requirements in a geographical area with severe and catastrophic water security issues.

The unbundling of land from water has generated an explosion of development in the River Systems and on flood plains. This has generated a Goldrush/Water rush mentality and has presented multiple challenges. There has been an ongoing drain on this scarce resource which requires a commitment to find solutions based in science.

An example of the politicized nature of decisions made without scientific scrutiny in the Basin can be explored in the 2018 Northern Basin Review. The 2018 Amendment by Federal Government, supported by the opposition reduced the water recovery target in the Northern Connected Basin from 390GL to 370GL. [Northern Disclosure - The Australia Institute](#) .

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

With the Rivers full from a few wet years Developers and investors overlook the destruction the millennial drought and previous droughts delivered to the Basin. With investors stalking the water market for its huge returns the Water Sector must collectively assess the risks existing through accelerated developments and diminishing intakes. The Millennium drought is a stark reminder of the ephemerality of the River's in the Murray Darling Barka Basin.

Minutes to be confirmed at the 79th AGM

Motion 6.2 MORATORIUM ON AGRICULTURAL & HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

J Modica moved to remove the motion. Noted that the motion would be brought to the MDA Board for discussion.

Mildura Rural City Council, Region 4

That the Murray Darling Association call on the Federal, State, and Municipal governments to introduce a moratorium on new greenfield irrigated agricultural and horticultural developments aligning with Victoria's moratorium policy.

And call to review all new greenfield irrigated agricultural and horticultural development in The Murray Darling Barka Basin. To protect the sustainability of existing horticulture and agriculture businesses and the environment in drought years. Acknowledging the reduction in system inflows and the historic boom and bust cycle within the Basin.

WITHDRAWN

Objective:

This motion seeks to bring attention to the exponential growth in permanent and perennial developments in the Murray Darling Barka Basin and the system's ability to manage another millennium drought. It also deals with the volume of water needed to service all new development and developments which have not reached full production in dry and drought years.

Key Arguments:

There would be an overall environmental and ecological benefit initially, then community and amenity benefit with the overall goal of sustainable waterways coexisting with healthy working Rivers and sustainable horticulture and agriculture.

What is the current context/issue?

The rapid increase in horticulture and agriculture is putting direct pressure on water supply and system management. The scarcity of water and diminishing intakes through drought and climate change has put a drain on the security of access and allocation for Horticulture Agriculture and Environment requirements equally. An assessment based in science of these overlapping concerns would aid managing future droughts.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

Environment and ecological disaster and the reduction of farming in Australia. The desertion of towns and villages which rely on healthy connected Rivers with flow, connectivity, and people.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

A healthy sustainable Murray Darling Barka Basin with a return of natural ecological landscapes and sustainable farming practices

Motion 6.3 MENINDEE LAKES – RAMSAR SITE

J Modica acknowledged that his motion was raised during the 2021 AGM.

J Modica was queried whether a RAMSAR Site listing would inhibit the operations of the Menindee Lakes.

- J Modica indicated that this is not something he would be able to answer.

J Modica was queried whether associated bureaucratic problems associated with a RAMSAR Site listing had been considered.

- J Modica noted that he would be willing to lobby regarding this.

G Dobson noted that the Motion was not definitive, indicated that it was asking the MDA to write to Governments regarding the RAMSAR Site listing.

M Rebbeck requested that the MDA explore the effect downstream of the Menindee Lakes.

Mildura Rural City Council, Region 4

That the Murray Darling Association:

- 1. Call on Basin Governments to support further exploration of the listing of the Menindee Lakes as a Ramsar site. The Menindee Lakes are a refuge for people, fish, frogs, flora, and fauna.**
- 2. Write to the relevant Federal and State Ministers seeking support in prioritizing the Menindee Lakes as a Ramsar site.**

CARRIED

Objective:

To preserve the environmental and ecological integrity of the Menindee Lakes system and the Lower Darling Barka for communities and First Peoples. To ensure there are unregulated lengths of wild river to enhance native fish breeding through floods big medium and small.

Key Arguments:

The benefit would be on many levels. To community, first peoples, the environment, removing the stress of dry Lakes and Lower Darling Barka Fish kills. To reverse system decline and address the decline in native fish numbers, less than 10% of native fish inhabit Basin rivers.

What is the current context/issue?

With Menindee Lakes full the positives are easily seen and recorded. Now is the time to ensure protection of this unique site and its central link between the Northern and Southern Connected Basins.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

There is a risk that after the wet period the pressure on the Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling Barka will return with even greater ecological damage.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Benefit of this motion is to guarantee flow and connectivity along the Barwon/Darling Barka Rivers. To support First People and Communities.

Motion 6.4 FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING VOLUME CAP

J Modica noted the issue on the Lower Darling as absolutely catastrophic. Indicated that this motion was trying to present the idea to enforce a cap without any ill intent.

J Modica was queried whether this cap would be for only the Northern Rivers, or all the rivers, with a comment, that if it was a cap for all rivers there would be little support.

D Thurley clarified that these motions were simply to put forth the view of the MDA, and not to cut across the State Governments

Wentworth Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Region 4

That the Murray Darling Association call on Basin Governments to legislate the volume of floodplain harvesting to the 1995 Cap for the protection and environmental integrity of Northern NSW, Southern Queensland Rivers, and Barwon Darling Barka Rivers.

CARRIED

Objective:

This motion is endeavouring to protect the environmental, ecological, social integrity of the lands and communities along the Rivers where unregulated floodplain harvesting has led to and exacerbated unprecedented low rivers and drought.

Key Arguments:

The communities' lands and first peoples along the River Systems in the Murray Darling Barka Basin would benefit from a healthy reliable access to water and its amenity.

What is the current context/issue?

There is a belief, matched by the unprecedented development since the Water Act was implemented in 2007, that ongoing growth and extraction is possible. This belief is bolstered through multiple wet years. A consideration of the risks already existing needs assessment because of the variability and ephemerality in Australian Rivers. A deeper engagement with outcomes of Climate Change is a necessary consideration if water intakes into the system become even more variable.

Recently the NSW ICAC called out the failure of water policy in NSW as being "unruly focused on the interests of the irrigation industry" over the rights of other users. Without intervention this unacceptable situation will continue.

Troy Grant Inspector General of Water Compliance Stated at the MDBA River Reflections forum in Mildura on the 2 of June this Year. NSW's level of accountability under the Basin Plan is not equal to that of other Basin states and the territory, each of which have accredited WRPs.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

The risks are that the water sector will again ignore multiple volumes of evidence proving mismanagement, single mindedness, and lack of engagement. The sector must intervene and not let an amoral market dictate what a finite connected system can endure through unprecedented growth and the looming reality of climate change.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

To ensure there is a balanced view within the Basin Rivers. Considering sustainable horticulture and agriculture, flow and connectivity within the system and a deeper engagement with climate change and climate mitigation.

Motion 6.5 DRAFT WESTERN REGIONAL WATER STRATEGY CONSULTATION

G Sauer expressed that the 195GL was too low, would like to see it raised to 480GL.

C Davies queried where the water would come from if it were raised to 480GL.

- Indication was made that the 480GL would be sitting in the lakes.

Broken Hill City Council, Central Darling Shire Council, Wentworth Shire Council, Region 4

(G Sauer/ J Modica)

That the Murray Darling Association:

- Express the disappointment and dismay of its Region 4 members that public consultation of the Draft Western Regional Water Strategy failed to adequately consult the river communities of the Lower Darling Barka; and that it has just recently been purported in media that Ministerial approval of the Draft Strategy has been given whilst public consultation was still ongoing and before the department had reported its findings.**
- Call for an amendment to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment's Western Regional Water Strategy to increase the critical dry conditions trigger for the Menindee Lakes System from 195GL of total storage across all Lakes - to 480GL of total storage in Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo only, which will guarantee an accessible 12 month quality water supply for critical environmental and human needs for river communities and First Nations lands of the Lower Darling-Barka.**

CARRIED

Objective:

This motion to amend the Western Regional Water Strategy is endeavouring to protect the environmental, ecological, social integrity of First Nations lands and communities of the Lower Darling Barka and the Menindee Lakes System during periods of drought to ensure an accessible quality water supply for critical environmental and human needs for townships whose only permanent water supply is provided by the Lakes; and to prevent a recurrence of the previous devastation caused by unregulated floodplain harvesting in the Upper Darling-Barka and its tributaries which exacerbated unprecedented low rivers, drought and destruction of the river's ecosystems in the Lower Darling-Barka and Menindee Lakes System.

The objective of this motion is also to provide connectivity of the Darling-Barka and Murray Rivers to ensure a healthy river system for all.

Key Arguments:

A critical dry conditions trigger of 195 GL of total storage across all lakes at the Menindee Lakes System is inadequate and will not guarantee a 12-month water supply for the river communities of the Lower Darling-Barka or prevent a recurrence of the previous ecological disaster.

What is the current context/issue?

Support for the 640GL/480GL rule of the Murray Darling Basin Plan for management of the Menindee Lakes System, on the basis, when management returns to NSW control, the 480GL is held in Lakes Pamamaroo and Wetherell and excludes any dead water component, with the primary goal to ensure the connectivity of the Darling and Murray Rivers and to meet critical environmental and human needs.

Dead water and undeliverable water should not be accounted for in the equation, i.e., when storage recedes there remains approximately 30GL of dead storage in Lake Pamamaroo, and a lesser amount of dead storage in Lake Wetherell that cannot be accessed.

During the peak of the drought in 2017/2018, 480GL of water was stored across all Lakes- being approximately 170GL of water stored in Lakes Cawndilla and Menindee (that became dead storage as it couldn't be accessed) and 310 in Lakes Pamamaroo and Wetherell (which also included a smaller amount of dead storage as mentioned above). This amount of water storage across all Lakes led to the destruction of the Lakes ecosystems .

If 480GL spread across all Lakes in 2017/2018 wasn't enough to prevent an ecological disaster, then how can 195GL spread across all Lakes be enough to prevent the same disaster happening again?

The use of Lake Pamamaroo and Lake Wetherell for storage being the preferred option, as opposed to all the Lakes, is due to these two lakes being the deepest lakes in the Menindee Lakes System thus providing the best chance to sustain the water quality during the summer months and ensuring the least amount of evaporation. The proposal of 195GL supported by Water NSW was modelled on all water being held in Lake Wetherell.

The critical environmental needs of the First Nations lands and the critical human needs of river communities whose only source of a permanent water supply comes from the Lower Darling-Barka and Menindee Lakes System, should be the principal consideration in all State Water Strategies and Water Sharing Plans in order that a quality water supply remains in the Menindee Lakes System during times of dry rivers and drought.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

If the critical dry conditions trigger of 195GL of total storage across all lakes in the Menindee Lakes System is not amended in the newly approved Western Regional Water Strategy, the quality of the water will deteriorate at a faster rate due to a larger surface volume of shallow water susceptible to a higher rate of evaporation, higher resultant salinity levels and algal blooms due to increased water temperatures during summer months. Shallow water across all the Lakes will also result in an increased amount of "dead water" unable to be accessed.

As a result, the river communities will experience a recurrence of the ecological disaster of 2017/2018 when management of the Lakes returned to NSW control, namely:

Economic loss to the region due to a decrease in tourism to the Menindee Lakes System and townships (the area has received significant visitation since the refilling of the Lakes, and this has provided a significant economic and social boost to the communities).

Indigenous communities were unable to continue cultural practices that have been a part of their lives for generations, due to a lack of cultural flows. This has severely impacted the mental health of many and not just our Aboriginal population in the community and has had dire consequences and anecdotally it is believed it has triggered suicide (water and the connection to it are an important part of Aboriginal cultural identity and quality of life).

A return of health conditions associated with poor water quality which was the cause of skin disease in children of the Central Darling and Wentworth Shires. Poor water quality activated a huge humanitarian effort in the donation and freight of bottled water to residents of the townships of Menindee and Wilcannia. These donations came from Broken Hill and South Australia.

Long-term changes to the Lakes natural ecology including erosion, changing water temperatures, removal of habitat for fish breeding, reduced supply of organic material and nutrients, a reduced water quality and a build-up of salt, has all contributed to outbreaks of blue-green algae and mass fish kills. The Barwon-Darling contains important environmental assets. For example, at least four resident fish species are listed under the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994. The 'Lowland Darling River aquatic endangered ecological community' is also listed under the same NSW Act. Additionally, Murray cod and silver perch are listed on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature red list of threatened species, and also listed under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Changes to environmental processes of the Menindee Lakes System has ultimately restructured the food supply, therefore either resulting in the death or migration of water birds and native animals leading to further changes to the natural ecological systems. The Barwon-Darling River is a "dryland river", which means it is naturally prone to periods of extensive low flow punctuated by periods of flooding. The presence of Murray Cod who are the sentinels of permanent waterholes tells us that deliverable water must be maintained in the Lakes to ensure that this species and others can survive the dry non-flow periods.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

To provide connectivity of the Darling-Barka and Murray Rivers to ensure the health of the whole river system, its eco-systems, its First Nations lands and river communities.

Motion 6.6 EFFECTS OF SEA-LEVEL RISE

M Rebbeck noted that the motion spoke for itself, noting sea-level rise would encroach upstream. M Rebbeck expressed the need for sea-level rise to be considered and reflected in upgrades in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Coorong District Council, Region 6

(M Rebbeck / A Tilley)

That the Murray Darling Association requests that the Murray Darling Basin Authority encompass the effects of sea-level rise on the lower Murray River, Lakes, and Coorong in their Climate Change research for inclusion in the 2026 Murray Darling Basin Review Report and the updated MDB Plan.

CARRIED

Objective:

Since the Millennium drought and the creation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, many academic studies and reports have been published on the Basin, including the effects of Climate Change. The studies on the lower Murray River, its lakes, the Coorong and the Murray Mouth have referenced separate academic studies on climate change and the resultant sea-level rise. They also acknowledge the flooding of the barrier islands at the Murray Mouth with seawater that bypasses the present barrage system and permeates the lakes.

However, these reports have always been restricted by their Terms of Reference to being centric to their point of interest, generally environmental and RAMSAR. As such, although they recognise the likelihood of the Barrage system no-longer being effective in preventing seawater entering the lakes, the reports do not address the socio-economic effects on South Australia of seawater travelling upriver, as down river flows are reduced due to climate change.

Further unlimited research needs to be undertaken. It is crucial this is acknowledged, and all research is included in the next Outlook report because of its importance, particularly for the Lower Murray Communities.

The CSIRO acknowledged that by 2050-60, the average annual stream flows in the Basin could be reduced by 20 to 30% due to climate change. In fact, we are experiencing worse than this in recent drought years with record low inflows. Reduced rainfall, higher evaporation and plant transpiration are addressed; however, there appears to be no acknowledgment of the consequential effects of Sea-Level Rise as the river flow to the sea diminishes. If the rising sea level is encompassed by increasing drought the consequences for saline inflow into the basin are enormous.

This motion intends to get the MDBA and Governments to acknowledge the consequence of allowing seawater to penetrate the Murray River and the domino, socio-economic effects this would bring to riparian communities and communities of South Australia, reliant on waters below Blanchetown.

e.g., Domestic water for SA Mid-north and Yorke Peninsula (Figure 1)- Swan Reach pipeline; greater Adelaide dependent on the Mannum & Murray Bridge pipelines; SA Upper South-East, dependent on the Tailem Bend to Keith pipeline; the Wine Districts of the Barossa, Clare and Langhorne Creek.

Who would benefit from this motion?

All communities that are reliant upon the freshwaters of the Murray River below Blanchetown would be decimated by the inundation of seawater into the river system.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

The MDBA collects data from a number of sources for inclusion in the Outlook Report and various other Reports. Sources of data include:

- river operators
- the science community

- independent advisors
- various reviews, which included significant community, First Nations, and other stakeholder input
- Australian Government and Basin state and territory governments.

The MDBA has built in several independent check points to validate results and ensure that the Evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of implementation progress and outcomes at the Basin scale. The Evaluation examines and publishes available environmental, social, and economic research to provide practical actions to guide the journey of continuous improvement

However there appears to be no scientific study available that specifically has addressed the socio-economic effects on the larger portion of South Australia's population caused by the lower River Murray being inundated by seawater.

The Government scientifically acknowledges climate Change and rising sea levels.

In 2016, the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility modelled that by 2050, sea-level rise at the Murray Mouth would reach 1.2 m above mean sea level or AHD. At this level, seawater will flood across the low-lying islands at the Murray Mouth, bypassing the barrage system unabated and entering the Lower Lakes and the River Murray. It is further predicted that this inundation would achieve 1.62 m AHD by 2100, not only threatening the local ecology in the Coorong and Lower Lakes, the salinity level of the river below Blanchetown and the consequential impact on those communities reliant upon that water supply but in some areas, isolating road access. Dr Chiew et.al. confirm similar rises by 2100 in his team's 2020 review of the Lower Lakes science.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

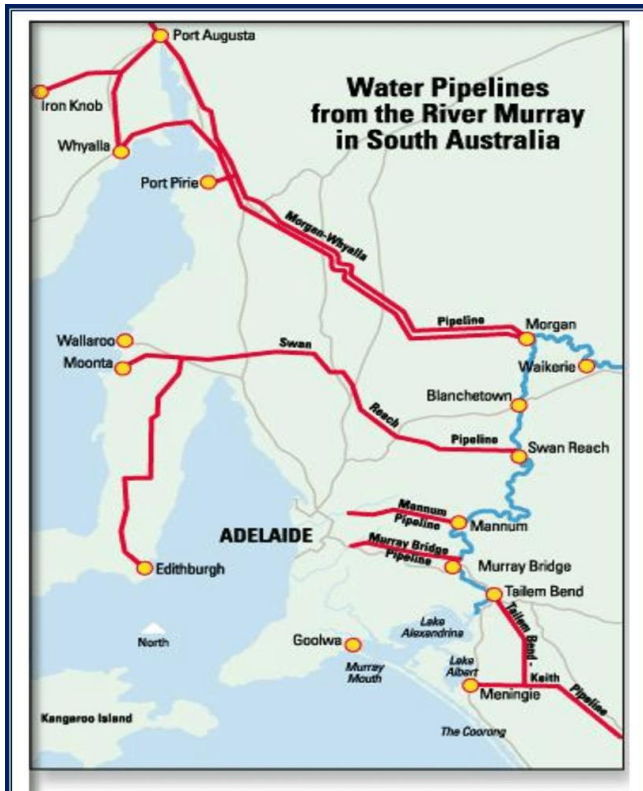
If the Government, its Basin States, and the Murray Darling Basin Authority do not acknowledge and work towards the mitigation of Sea-Level Rise by 2030 the pool level of saline water below Blanchetown, weir 1, could reach 1.62m by 2100 and continue to rise. The Blanchetown weir holds the river at a maximum of 3.3m AHD Pool height.

What are the ramifications to communities when the sea level exceeds river level?

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

The Federal Government needs to recognise and respond to the threats posed by rising sea levels v. reduced downriver flows (drought) due to climate change and mitigate those threats.

Figure 1. S.A. Murray River Pipelines. Source: Discover Murray River, 2014



REFERENCE:

- Effect of Sea-Level Rise on Alexandrina Council, Murray Mouth and its barrier Islands 2050 -2100 - https://coastadapt.com.au/se-a-level-rise-information-all-australian-coastal-councils#SA_ALEXANDRINA
- History and Review of Lower Lakes Science (p.10) - Dr Chiew et.al. 2020 <https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/>
- Murray Darling Water and Environment Research <https://getinvolved.mdba.gov.au/murray-darling-water-and-environment-research-program>

Minutes to be confirmed at the

Motion 6.7 GREATER FIRST NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

M Rebbeck noted that this motion promoted changing placenames with translations to incorporate current and traditional names. Indicated that it was worth consideration for member councils to do the same. M Rebbeck noted hearing from the CSIRO and other speakers at the 78th National Conference of the importance of First Nations involvement in the Basin, expressed that the First Nations people were the greatest water stewards and could pass on this information.

G Dobson cautioned against this motion. Noted that the Greater Shepparton City Council had a First Nations Councillor and referenced protocols in withing with First Nations people. G Dobson queried whether this motion should go out for consultation, indicating that there are many different First Nations communities.

D Thurley noted that the motion called on members to consult with Traditional Owners, and only consider this. Noted that as Councillor of AlburyCity he would support this motion, as this motion does not compel its members, rather consider the motion. D Thurley noted the recent renaming of placenames to their First nations names with overwhelming approval.

Region 6

(M Rebbeck / A Tilley)

- a) That the MDA calls upon Member Councils of the Association to consider the assignment of Traditional names for dual-naming of locations within their district; and
- b) That all Member Councils, in consultation with Traditional Owners, consider the inclusion of local, Traditional place names as well as non-Aboriginal place names and translations on all replacement signs in their district.
- c) That the MDA calls upon the State Governments to ensure appropriate funding is allowed in each financial year for the inclusion of these names to replacement and new signs. d) The MDA calls upon the Federal and State Governments to ensure greater awareness of Traditional Culture is offered in regional school curriculum.

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

Greater involvement by First Nations into the management of the MDB.

Who would benefit from this motion?

These actions would demonstrate reconciliation towards First nations across the MDB acknowledging their lands, waters, environment, and communities across the MDB.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

Indigenous cultures have over 60,000 years of connection to country and understanding of the importance of responsible water use.

Greater cultural integration will allow indigenous nations to teach the connection to country to all people, therefore supporting our nations to all be more responsible for water use.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

Less cultural integration and less responsible water use.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Enhanced reconciliation and communities jointly working together for the benefit of our shared lands and waters.

This Motion is supported by the Naranjeri Regional Authority (NRA).

Motion 6.8 PROGRESS REPORTING ON THE 450GL RECOVERY PROGRAM

M Rebbeck noted that there was a desire for a clear understanding on the progress of the 450GL recovery program.

Region 6

(M Rebbeck / A Kassebaum)

That the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) or the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water publishes clear, simple, timely, and accurate reporting to show progress on the delivery of the 450 GL Recovery Programs.

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

To provide current, accurate, clear, precise, and simple to follow, updates from all jurisdictions to show the progress in Water Efficiency Measures projects.

Background

The Basin Plan includes a provision for up to 450 GL/y additional water recovery separate from the gap-bridging target. This is for enhanced environmental outcomes on the condition that there are neutral or positive socio-economic impacts from the water recovery.

According to the former Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment website, 426.1 GL/y remains to be found, with no reporting or certainty on achieving when, where or how this water.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Basin Communities and the Environment. Upfront and verified data on the progress of these projects gives all Regions confidence in the Basin Plan, the regional and State Plans and the ability to meet the targets set.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

This motion intends to find and report on the progress of the Water Efficiency Measures projects to meet the target of 450 GL/y.

Apart from the publication of the Second Review of the Water for the Environment Special Account: December 2021 for the Commonwealth Minister for Water Resources, no other timely or current reporting on this issue is available.

There are numerous pages on both websites describing efficiency measures generally, with no links to state plans and the efficiency projects and how much water is planned to be recovered or recovered to date. Both sites refer to each other for more information as well as to State Government websites, which also do not provide detailed plans or results. A comprehensive report is, however, available on the completion of the savings from South Australia.

The lack of progress in meeting the 450 GL/y is compounded by the limited information available about the plans and progress.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

That reporting and progress will continue to be poor.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Increased confidence in the reporting mechanism of the Murray Darling Basin Authority and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to deliver on the Basin Plan.

Motion 6.9 NSW WATER RESOURCE PLANS

M Rebbeck referenced discussions with the MDBA at the 78th National Conference, acknowledged the progress of the NSW Water Plans.

P Shepherd noted that if you want the NSW Water Plans done properly and thoroughly, you don't want the quality to be compromised.

- D Thurley noted that Water Resource Plans need to meet the requirements, that there cannot be any compromises.

P Wright spoke against the motion, noting that there could be external effects causing the delay of the Water Resource Plans approval. Referenced comments by the MDBA CEO Andrew McConville that it took 13 weeks to approve a plan, and that they could only approve four (4) plans at once.

Region 6

(M Rebbeck / A Kassebaum)

That the MDA call on the Australian Water Minister to set final submission dates and apply Section 68 of the Water Act 2007 for the Murray Darling Basin Authority to prepare and approve the New South Wales Water Resource Plans as required by the Murray Darling Basin Plan, in line with all other Basin States and Territories.

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

For the Water Minister to request the MDBA to prepare all outstanding NSW Water Resource Plans for approval by the Minister to deliver the outcomes of the MDBP. This will ensure that the environment, human needs, industrial, agricultural, cultural, native title, town water supply and stock and domestic needs of riparian landowners along the length of the river are provided for, as a priority, during extended dry periods.

Background:

NSW is three years behind the second deadline set by the Australian Government for the completion and approval of the Water Resource Plans required to deliver the agreed outcomes of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Without these plans, the promised water cannot be delivered and the industrial, human and environmental components of the MDB will suffer further. These plans are legislated to be implemented by 2024.

The Australian Government Water Minister is empowered within the Water Act 2007, Section 68[1] to request the MDBA to prepare Water Resource Plans upon meeting particular conditions, such as where no current or temporary Water Resource Plan exists.

Who would benefit from this motion?

- All Basin Communities and the Environment.

Key Arguments:

Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory completed their Water Recovery Plans according to the timeline established in the Murray Darling Basin Plan, however, NSW is progressing very slowly, putting the MDB Plan in jeopardy.

What is the current context/issue?

No WRP's are in place across NSW since legislated to be completed 10 years ago. Every state, and the territory, had seven years to build these plans. They were due to start in 2019 and already, they are three years overdue from being finalised.

The Basin Plan requires a WRP to set out the method for determining the maximum quantity of water permitted to be taken for consumptive use in each accounting period. The WRP also establishes the method for determining the annual actual take.

Accredited WRPs are required to enable compliance and enforcement, and those plans also ensure the following:

- i. The limits on how much water can be taken from the system and that water takes are maintained
- ii. That water will be made available to the environment
- iii. Consideration for cultural values and uses; and finally,
- iv. Water quality targets are managed.[2]

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

That the MDB Plan will fail to provide water to all communities, particularly in drought years and increasing threats under the influence of Climate Change. That by failing to produce the required plans, NSW cannot be audited or can be taking more water than entitled without consequences.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Fairness and equity across the Basin, an equal playing field between states and territories, more water for all, and a resilient River system.

Motion 6.10 CIRCULAR ECONOMIC PROJECT FUNDING

M Rebbeck noted that the MDA had heard from a number of speakers regarding the Circular Economy at the 78th National Conference, referenced the MDA's recent work with the CSIRO on the Circular Economy Market Analysis.

Region 6

(M Rebbeck / C Davies)

That the MDA advocate to basin governments for funding for circular economic projects that include drawing down carbon, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

Supporting regional local governments to have access to information and technology that will allow circular economic projects that encompass waste to energy, increased economic improvement in towns, carbon drawdown, renewable energy, and water savings and hence enhanced economic viability to the region.

At the national MDA conference in 2022, several circular economic projects that encompass water savings are being presented.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Some projects may invariably improve soil water holding capacity an opportunity that could be considered by governments in water-saving plans.

Regional communities may also be able to claim carbon credits if they are doing projects that draw down carbon.

Regional communities will benefit economically from implementing these projects in regional towns.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

The MDA is currently working with the CSIRO on the opportunities and barriers to circular economic projects in regional towns. There are many opportunities for circular economic projects in regional towns.

Regional towns need education on the benefits of the circular economic project. Elected members and administration of councils should be briefed on their potential and implement resources to research possible projects for each MDB council region.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

That towns along the MDB will not have the opportunity to benefit economically and also less opportunity for drought and climate change mitigation.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

The projects will benefit the economic viability of towns and may include strategies that support drought resilience, and adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

Motion 6.11 CLARIFICATION OF ANNUAL WATER ALLOCATION METHODOLOGY

Region 9

(G Andrezza / C Davies)

That the Murray Darling Association write to the NSW Minister for Water seeking clarification as to the methodologies used to determine annual water allocations IN EACH OF THE REGULATED RIVERS in NSW and variations to these allocations during the year. The timing of these water allocation decisions and adjustments are not currently aligned with critical business investment decisions made by the diverse agricultural sector.

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

To achieve transparency and an understanding in water allocations and gauge some surety for agricultural investment decisions.

Who would benefit from this motion?

The whole region including the triple bottom line framework of economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Key Arguments:

At the MDA Region 9 Meeting on Thursday 8 September, the following Resolution was carried following a Motion by Mayor Ruth McRae, Murrumbidgee Council and Seconded by Cr Geoff Chapman, Hay Shire Council.

What is the current context/issue?

Concerned local government areas that rely on water allocations.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

There will continue to be a lack of transparency in terms of water allocation decisions and perpetuate negative impacts on communities.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Clarification in the methodology would bring about an understanding of water allocation decision making.

Motion 6.12 “BENEFIT COST RATIO” REQUIREMENTS

G Sauer noted that this motion was submitted as there were a number of projects put forth in the Northern Basin that were knocked back, noted that the Hume and Dartmouth dams would not have been constructed if held up to the Cost to Benefit ratio requirements.

J Modica noted support for the motion, though noted that the removal of the Cost to Benefit Ratio could introduce risk.

P Shepherd noted support for the motion. Expressed that Cost to Benefit Ratios must be addressed as there were a number of things that did not stack up.

L Yates noted support for the Cost to Benefit Ratio Requirements, indicated that if you could not show the benefit to cost ratio, the project should be left alone.

P Wright expressed that what went into the Cost to Benefit Ratios was fickle at times.

M Howie noted support, indicated that with Cost to Benefit Ratio Requirements, the social benefits of a project are often missed.

Region 11

(G Sauer / A Tilley)

That the MDA call on the Commonwealth Government and the basin State Governments to remove the requirements for a “Benefit Cost Ratio” (BCR) greater than one to be applied to funding applications for water storage projects such, as but not limited to; New dam construction and raising the height of existing dam walls.

CARRIED

Objective:

That the MDA call on the Commonwealth Government and the basin State Governments to remove the requirements for a “Benefit Cost Ratio” (BCR) greater than one to be applied to funding applications for water storage projects such, as but not limited to; New dam construction and raising the height of existing dam walls.

Motion 6.13 OWNERSHIP AND ACCESS TO WATER FOR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PURPOSES FOR THE BASIN'S INDIGENOUS NATIONS

M Rebbeck noted that this motion had been highly consulted with the NRA and MILDRN, noted that this motion was about MDA support for cultural water.

Region 6

(M Rebbeck / A Tilley)

That the MDA support the provision of water for cultural and economic purposes for Indigenous Nations of the Murray Darling Basin (MDB).

The MDA support the Commonwealth and all Basin jurisdictions (including their relevant statutory authorities and/or agencies) to:

- (1) Work collaboratively with Nations to waive annual entitlement holding and use fees for groundwater and surface water shares and,**
- (2) Commit to appropriately resourcing the Basin's indigenous Nations (either directly or via a Nation's preferred body) to enable relevant First Nations led research including, but not limited to, legislative and policy reform to achieve cultural flows Nations within the MDB.**

CARRIED

Objective:

What is this motion trying to achieve?

Restorative water justice for Indigenous Nations within the Basin via the provision of cultural flows, first articulated in the Echuca Declaration (2007). Cultural flows are water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by First Nations.

Who would benefit from this motion?

Indigenous Nations across the MDB as well as the environment and communities across the MDB. Recreation, Indigenous-agriculture, and tourism-related sectors are likely to grow as a result of this proposed initiative. Australia would also be upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)(endorsed in 2009).

MILDRN and NRA are in support of this Motion.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

Since colonisation, First Nations across the MDB have endured multiple waves of water dispossession. More recently, dispossession has been exacerbated by the separation of land and water and the subsequent creation of tradable water rights. Put simply, First Nations are at a profound disadvantage in a market-based system that requires considerable capital to purchase even a modest quantity of water.

First Nations own 0.022% of available groundwater resources across the MDB and 0.2% of available surface water in the NSW part of the Basin. Commitments by the Australian and Basin State governments to progress First Nations' objectives for water are supported by international declarations and conventions. Australia has endorsed UNDRIP and is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The UNDRIP states that First Nations people have rights to own, use and develop waters that they traditionally owned. Australia currently has 66 Wetlands of International Importance listed under the Ramsar Convention, and 16 of these are in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Ramsar Convention has long promoted the recognition and strengthening of First Nations peoples as key participants in conservation and integrated wetland management (see Target 10 of Goal 3: Wisely Using All Wetlands, of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024).

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

Maintenance of the status quo i.e., Indigenous Nations within the Basin without cultural flows. Ongoing criticism of Federal and State governments in failing to deliver water (justice) to indigenous Nations. Damage to Australia's good international standing in consideration of UNDRIP.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

Resolution of a long-standing social, political and economic injustice and, as a result of empowered Basin Indigenous Nations. This would be a watershed moment in realizing significantly improved environmental, economic and social outcome

REFERENCES

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13241583.2021.1970094>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07900627.2020.1868980>

[https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/sa-mldrin-echuca-declaration\[1\]](https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/sa-mldrin-echuca-declaration[1]) .

Minutes to be confirmed at the 79th AGM

Motion 6.14

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR MANAGED AQUIFER RECHARGE

A Tilley noted that this motion had been spoke about during the 78th National Conference, that the motion had been written following consultation with the CSIRO after the recent Inter-Regional Meeting. A Tilley referenced progress on this application of water storage in the United States.

Region 7

(A Tilley / R Coleman)

MDA support and advocate for exploring the potential for managed aquifer recharge (MAR) to contribute to efficient water management and increase regional water security throughout the Basin.

CARRIED

Objective:

1. Quantify the savings through efficiencies and increases to water security that could be realised through strategic MAR for drought resilience.
2. Develop appropriate policy, accounting and regulatory frameworks that enable MAR to be implemented fairly and transparently.
3. Establish well documented demonstration MAR sites in the MDB.

Key Arguments:

What is the current context/issue?

Managed aquifer recharge, or MAR, refers to the intentional recharge of water to aquifers for subsequent use or environmental benefit.

Managed aquifer recharge is an internationally proven, low-cost solution that could improve drought resilience across the Murray Darling Basin. While significant potential for managed aquifer recharge (MAR) and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater resources has been identified in the Murray Darlin Basin, there is a need to improve the quantification of benefits and establish clear policy and institutional foundations to incentivise uptake. Harmonised approaches between jurisdictions may promote confidence and uptake however different frameworks require further consultation and testing in the context of different water resources and regulatory systems. The current Basin Plan supports MAR and would be complementary with objectives and outcomes sought by future Basin Plans. Existing water accounting systems would need to accommodate this new capacity. Institutional arrangements and financial structures of water banking in the USA provide guidance for Australia. Demonstration sites would enable concurrent policy development and institutional set-up and provide critical experience to serve as models for wider adoption as part of future Murray Darling Basin plans.

What are the risks of this motion doesn't get up?

A failure of this motion to be supported would result in a missed opportunity to raise the profile and priority of a technology that offers the potential to make tangible differences to water management in Australia. Support is needed at all levels of government for the full potential benefits of MAR to be realised.

What is the broader benefit to Basin communities if this motion is successful?

MAR plays an important role in integrating the management of surface and groundwater resources for security of water supply while ensuring public health and environmental protection. Water storage is essential to improve the sustainability and resilience of water supply, both of which contribute to town water security, supporting agriculture and reducing pressure on the environment. In addition, natural treatment in the aquifer offers a low-cost, low-energy water treatment option.

Motion 6.15

THE JOHN KELL PROPOSAL

A Tilley noted the motion addressed a version of the Bradfield Scheme, referencing a history of different versions of the Bradfield scheme. Noted that this scheme looked at the Foxton Dam and was organised by John Kell. A Tilley noted that the proposed location had a similar topography to the Dartmouth Dam, and that the height of the proposed dam would allow for a gravity feed of the water across the ranges. Noted that the gravity Feed would allow for a potentially cheaper means of moving water than previous Bradfield Scheme versions. A Tilley indicated that the motion asked whether this could be done, expressing that the benefit of this would be much greater than the cost.

J Modica spoke against the motion, noting interest but outlining issues and difficulties from existing dams and infrastructure. J Modica indicated that the proposed Bradfield Scheme version was interesting and should be investigated, but that there were many other things the Basin could do instead. J Modica expressed that there must be limitations to what the Basin can do with water.

R Coleman spoke in support of the motion, noted that the John Kell proposal could be an incredible project that could service four (4) states. Expressed that all of Australia must work together to improve the Basin.

B Lewis spoke in support of the motion, noting a reduction in rainfall and an increase in temperatures in the Basin, B Lewis provided an open question of where the Basin should get its water from.

Region 7

(A Tilley / C Davies)

That the CEO of the MDA write to the Federal Minister for the Environment and to the relevant Ministers in NSW and Queensland seeking an update and the latest information on proposed new dams and changes to existing dams including, but not limited to, the modified Bradfield Scheme (the John Kell proposal) and the Wyangala Dam.

CARRIED

Objective:

That the CEO of the MDA write to the Federal Minister for the Environment and to the relevant Ministers in NSW and Queensland seeking an update and the latest information on proposed new dams and changes to existing dams including, but not limited to, the modified Bradfield Scheme (the John Kell proposal) and the Wyangala Dam.

This Motion was brought before the MDA Board for review and discussion on 18 July 2022. Following refinement, the Motion was submitted for the 2022 AGM.

7. Meeting Close

The Chair to declare the meeting closed at 4:45pm.

Committee's Report

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

Committee's Report

Your Committee members submit the financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc. for the financial period ended 31 March 2023.

Committee Members

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

Cr David Thurley	National President	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr David Thurley	Chair Region 1	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr Geoff Dobson	Chair Region 2	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Vacant	Chair Region 3	
Cr Tim Elstone	Chair Region 4	April 1st 2022 - May 31st 2022
Cr Jason Modica	Chair Region 4	May 31st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr Marion Browne	Chair (Interim) Region 4	March 16th 2023 - March 31st 2023
Cr Andrew Kassebaum	Chair Region 5	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Chair Region 6	April 1st 2022 - February 24th 2023
Cr Airlie Keen	Chair Region 6	February 24th 2023 - March 31st 2023
Cr Andrew Tilley	Chair Region 7	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Vacant	Chair Region 8	
Cr Glen Andreazza	Chair Region 9	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Mayor Phyllis Miller	Chair Region 10	April 1st 2022 - February 23 2023
Cr Craig Davies	Chair Region 10A	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr Craig Davies	Vice President	March 3rd 2023 - March 31st 2023
Cr Jamie Chaffey	Chair Region 11	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Cr Samantha O'Toole	Chair Region 12	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Mark Lamb	CEO and Public Officer	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023
Peter George	Treasurer	April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023

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 \$157,369 - [31 March 2022 (\$210,476)]

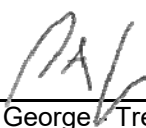
Going Concern

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 cashflows 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:



Cr David Thurley - National President



Peter George - Treasurer

Dated: 14th September 2023

Income and Expenditure Statement

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

		2023	2022
Income			
	Note		
Conference Income		110,079	80,840
Income - Memberships	2	205,866	221,167
Income - Projects		222,205	160,550
Income From Fundraising Events		-	317
Interest Income	3	-	53
Other Income	4	343	155
Total Income		538,493	463,082
Expenditure			
Depreciation			
Depreciation - Low Value Pool		-	36
Depreciation - Software		1,120	1,867
Depreciation - Office Equipment		1,087	2,020
Total Depreciation		2,207	3,923
Motor Vehicles			
Motor Vehicle Maintenance		3,691	2,963
Motor Vehicle Registration		1,564	1,238
Total Motor Vehicles		5,255	4,201
Advertising & Marketing		-	27,932
Bank Fees		32	854
Business Insurance		-	2,061
Computer Expenses		1,358	11,760
Conference Expenses		33,048	87,090
Engagement and Communications		-	6,326
General Repairs & Maintenance		-	824
Licences and Subscriptions		796	4,649
Loss on sale of assets		-	386
Project Expenses		4,674	28,884
Meeting Expense		-	6,743
Other Payroll Expenses	5	27,797	(58,242)
Postage		210	90
Premises Rent - Echuca		1,140	27,332
Printing		1,662	1,332
Professional Fees	6	6,830	70,351
Public Liability Insurance		-	1,224
Staff Amenities		-	-
Stationery		45	676
Superannuation		25,153	25,299
Telephone Expenses		2,226	6,232
Travel & Accom. Expenses		23,512	28,004
Wages & Salaries Expenses		242,217	381,043
Work Cover Premiums		2,959	4,583
Total Expenditure		381,123	673,558
Net Operating Profit / (Loss) For The period		157,369	(210,476)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Assets and Liabilities Statement

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash on Hand	7	107,016	19,129
Accounts Receivable and other Debtors	8	74,250	1,874
Total Current Assets		181,266	21,003
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	9	8,716	10,923
Other	10	-	-
Total Non-Current Assets		8,716	10,923
Total Assets		189,982	31,926
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts payable and other payables	11	35,947	63,323
Provisions	13	52,760	24,695
Total Current Liabilities		88,707	88,018
Non-Current Liabilities			
Non-Current Liabilities			
Borrowings	12	1,500	1,500
Total Non-Current Liabilities		1,500	1,500
Total Liabilities		90,207	89,518
Net Assets		99,775	(57,592)
Member's Funds			
Capital Reserve			
Reserves		-	-
Retained Earnings		99,775	(57,592)
Total Member's Funds		99,775	(57,592)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Movements in Equity

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

	Retained Earnings \$	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 April 2021	152,882	-	152,882
Comprehensive Income Profit (Loss) for the period	(210,476)	-	(210,476)
Total Comprehensive Income Other Revaluations	(210,476)	-	(210,476)
Total Other	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2022	(57,594)	-	(57,594)
Balance at 1 April 2022	(57,594)	-	(57,594)
Comprehensive Income Profit (Loss) for the period	157,369	-	157,369
Total Comprehensive Income Other Revaluations	157,369	-	157,369
Total Other	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	99,775	-	99,775

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
Cash flows from Operating Activities			
Other Receipts		494,214	519,934
Interest Received		-	53
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		<u>(406,327)</u>	<u>(693,942)</u>
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Operating Activities	18b	87,887	(173,955)
Cash flows from Investing Activities			
Proceeds from sale of Property, plant and equipment		-	1,100
Payments for Property, plant and equipment		-	(1,233)
Other cash items from Investing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>14,676</u>
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) Investing Activities		-	14,544
Cash flows from Financing Activities			
Other cash items from financing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>(197,768)</u>
Net Cash Provided by (Used In) from Financing Activities		-	(197,768)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		87,887	(357,179)
Cash on Hand at beginning of the Financial period		<u>19,129</u>	<u>376,308</u>
Cash on Hand at End of Financial period	18a	<u>107,016</u>	<u>19,129</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes of the Financial Statements

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

1. 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 cash flows that will be received from the asset's employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash 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 CONTINUED

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.

NOTES CONTINUED

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.

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.

NOTES CONTINUED

	2023	2022
2. Memberships		
Memberships	205,866	221,167
3. Interest Income		
Interest Received	-	53
4. Other Income		
Sundry Income	343	155
ATO Cashflow Boost	-	-
	<u>343</u>	<u>155</u>
5. Employee Entitlements		
Annual and Long Service Leave	27,797	(58,242)
6. Professional Fees		
Consulting Fees	-	62,166
Audit Fees	6,830	8,185
	<u>6,830</u>	<u>70,351</u>
7. Cash on Hand		
Cash At Bank	<u>107,016</u>	<u>19,129</u>
	107,016	19,129
8. Accounts Receivable and other Debtors		
Trade Debtors	74,250	808
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	-	-
Goods and Services Tax	-	1,066
	<u>74,250</u>	<u>1,874</u>

NOTES CONTINUED

	2023	2022
9. Property, Plant and Equipment		
Office Furniture, Equipment and Computers	9,670	9,670
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(7,633)	(6,546)
	2,037	3,124
Low Value Pool	-	-
Less Accumulated Depreciation	-	-
	-	0
Software	23,300	23,300
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(21,621)	(20,501)
	1,679	2,799
Artwork	5,000	5,000
	5,000	5,000
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	8,716	10,923
10. Other Non-Current Assets		
Bond Paid - Office	-	-
	-	-
11. Accounts Payable and Other Payables		
Trade Creditors	3,206	2,480
Prepaid Memberships	-	-
BCLP Grant Received	-	21,661
Tax Payable	32,740	39,182
	35,947	63,323
12. Borrowings		
Non-Current Debenture Loans	1,500	1,500
13. Provisions		
Current		
Provision for Annual Leave	43,460	15,662
Provision for Long Service Leave	-	-
Superannuation Liability	9,301	9,033
	52,760	24,695
Provision for Annual Leave Opening Balance 1 April 2022	15,661	52,561
Additional Provisions Raised	35,707	58,084
Amounts Taken	(7,908)	(94,984)
Balance at 31 March 2023	43,460	15,661
Provision for Long Service Leave Opening Balance 1 April 2022	-	21,343
Additional Provisions Raised	-	2,891
Amounts Taken	-	(24,234)
Balance at 31 March 2023	-	-

NOTES CONTINUED

	2023	2022
Total Provisions		
Opening Balance 1 April 2022	15,661	73,904
Additional Provisions Raised	35,707	60,975
Amounts Taken	(7,908)	(119,218)
Superannuation Liability	9,301	9,033
Balance at 31 March 2023	52,760	24,695

14. Reserves

Asset Revaluation Reserve

The asset revaluation reserve records revaluations of non-current assets. Under certain circumstances dividends can be declared from this reserve.

15. Capital Commitments

There are no commitments as at 31 March 2023 (31 March 2022: \$Nil)

16. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

There are no Contingent Liabilities at 31 March 2023 (31 March 2022: \$Nil). There are no Contingent Assets at 31 March 2023 (31 March 2022: \$Nil).

17. Events after the reporting period

Since 31 March 2023, there have been no events that would materially affect the Financial Statements at Balance Date.

18. Cash Flow Information

	2023	2022
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	107,016	19,129
	107,016	19,129
(b) Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities with net current period profit		
Current period profit after income tax	157,369	(210,476)
Cash flows excluded from current period profit:		
Depreciation Expense	2,207	3,923
Impairment Loss / (Gain) on Fixed Assets	-	386
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) / Decrease in Receivables	(72,378)	48,120
(Increase) / Decrease in Prepayments	-	(13,576)
Increase / (Decrease) in Payables	(27,376)	60,224
Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions	28,065	(62,556)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	87,887	(173,955)

Statement by Members of the Committee

MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

For the period ended 31 March 2023

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.

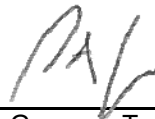
In accordance with a resolution of the committee of Murray Darling Association Inc. the members of the committee declare that the financial statements as set out on pages 15 to 26:

- 1 present a true and fair view of the financial position of Murray Darling Association Inc. as at 31 March 2023 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: 14th September 2023

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc, which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2023, and profit and loss statement.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matters described in the Basis for the Qualified Audit Opinion paragraphs, the financial report of Murray Darling Association Inc has been prepared in accordance with Murray Darling Association Inc's Constitution and the applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis of Qualified Opinion

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for the Murray Darling Association Inc to maintain an effective system of internal control over receipts until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, our audit in relation to receipts was limited to amounts recorded.

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 registered entity 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

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the entity's financial reporting responsibilities under its Constitution and the applicable Australian Accounting Standards. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

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Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Association are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine 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, the directors are responsible for assessing the entity'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 directors either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have 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 registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the director'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 registered entity'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 registered entity 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 directors 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Pollock', written in a cursive style.

Warren Pollock
Registered Company Auditor 224497
Kelly Partners Bendigo Partnership
Location- Bendigo
bendigo@kellypartners.com.au

14 September 2023