



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

## Ordinary Meeting of the Board

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020

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## MINUTES - MEETING No. 405

### 1. ATTENDANCE

#### 1.1. Present

Cr David Thurley	Albury City Council	Region 1
Cr Bronwyn Thomas	Federation Council	Region 2
Cr Jane MacAllister	Wentworth Shire Council	Region 4
Cr Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina Council	Region 6
Cr Brian Lockyer	Barunga West Council	Region 8
Cr Paul Maytom	Leeton Shire Council	Region 9
Cr Craig Davies	Narromine Council	Region 10A
Mayor Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Region 12
Emma Bradbury	MDA	CEO

#### 1.2. Apologies:

Cr. Peter Raison – Region 5  
Cr. John Campbell – Region 11  
Cr. Phyllis Miller – Region 10  
Cr Andrew Tilley – Region 7

**Motion:** That the apologies are received and noted.

B Thomas / B Lockyer

Carried

#### 1.3. Declarations

J MacAllister declared an interest in item 5.4 as a Wentworth Shire Council representative and abstained from voting in that item.

### 2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1. [Meeting 404](#) held via Zoom Calendar Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Motion:** That the minutes of board meeting 404 are approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

B Lockyer / M Rebbeck

Carried

### 3. REPORTS

#### 3.1. Chairman's report

D Thurley provided a brief chairman's report. D Thurley thanked Mr Dennis Patterson, past chair of Region 2, for his work and contributions including the work involved in holding the MDA's 2020 national conference. D Thurley acknowledged and welcomed new chair Cr Bronwyn Thomas from Federation Council.

#### 3.2. Finance reports

E Bradbury provided a brief summary of the finance reports.

E Bradbury noted that the MDA has engaged two staff on a part-time basis, who will begin in January 2021.

D Thurley noted that the success of the organisation is closely related to increasing staffing and resources.

3.3. Chief Executive Officers report

E Bradbury provided a written CEOs report and invited any questions or comments from the board.

M Rebbeck commented on the body of work achieved by the MDA executive and particularly E Bradbury as the CEO, from month to month. M Rebbeck noted her thanks for all that E Bradbury does in this space.

D Thurley agreed and noted the amount of work achieved from such a small staff.

3.4. Region reports

**Region 1**

**Cr David Thurley:** *The annual general meeting of Region 1 was held on Friday 20 November. I was re-elected unopposed as the Chair of R1. Cr's Wortmann and Gaffney were elected to the Executive. The next meeting of R1 will be in February 2021. Councils in R1 are being asked to consider the proposed MDA name change and provide feedback to help inform the Board's decision making. The guest speaker at the November meeting was Lucinda Corrigan, a local farmer, and previous Chair of Farmer's for Climate Action. She spoke about the work this group is doing and highlighted the challenges the agricultural sector faces as the effects of climate become more apparent with respect to drought and changing temperatures. The challenge for farming communities in the years ahead will be to adapt past practices to cope with the new challenges*

**Region 2**

**Cr Bronwyn Thomas:** *Region 2 held their AGM and GM on Monday 7th December 2020 at the Mulwala Yarrawonga Golf Club. This meeting was well attended with five member Councils (Berrigan, Moira, Greater Shepparton, Edward River and Federation) and additionally a guest speaker from Balranald was made welcome. The opportunity to have representatives (Mayor Murray River Council and CEO) from the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) to provide commentary on the "Water Position Paper" was most excellent. Outcomes from the meeting included:*

- *Region 2 support the consideration for the project "Yanga Lake-Murrumbidgee River e-Water Optimisation Project: Improving Connectivity into STLA project.*
- *RAMJO Water Statement and MDA Vision 20/25 contain complimentary core objects/goals and outcomes that will provide the platform for strong connections as the collaboration continues with State/Federal/LGA's and key stakeholders*

*Next MDA Region 2 meeting will be hosted by Greater Shepparton with arrangements being made to visit the First Nation Indigenous Co-operation of the Yorta Yorta Nation located at Barmah. This will enable MDA to gain an insight to the traditional aspect of water management and in particular the Barmah Choke. MDA to work with Department of Water and Environment Commission on the proposed briefing paper for Barmah Choke by-pass.*

**Region 4**

**Written Report, content taken from Region 4 meeting:** *Region 4 held an Ordinary Meeting on the 8th of December 2020, which was attended by delegates from Wentworth Shire council, Balranald Shire Council, Central Darling Shire Council and Mildura Shire Council. The meeting included discussions about the MDA name-change, climate ready-communities, the NSW ICAC report as well as a presentation of a project proposed by Gavin Helgeland titled "Yanga Lake –Murrumbidgee River e-Water Optimisation*

*Project: Improving Connectivity". Region 4 also discussed the following items:*

- *Proposed Legislative Amendments for Floodplain Harvesting in NSW*
- *Menindee Lakes Water Saving Project*
- *MDA Conference 2021*
- *MDA Submission to the NSW Border Rivers: Floodplain Harvesting in Water Sharing Plans*

## **Region 6**

**Cr Melissa Rebbeck:** *Thanks for our secretariat Nathan for providing the following region report. In addition to the below report, I would like to note the work of Rebekha Sharkie MP will begin to commence on a water institute and possible opportunities for the MDA to be involved.*

## **Region Meetings**

- *At the inaugural meeting of the MRLGA Water Position Working Group:*
  - *Cr Andrew Kassebaum was appointed Chair.*
  - *Region 6 clarified its membership as Cr Melissa Rebbeck, an Executive member and Nathan Bicknell as a guest.*
  - *The next Region 6 Ordinary Meeting and AGM will be held on 5 February 2021 in Taillem Bend (Coorong District Council):*
  - *Nominations have been sort for Region 6 Committee (Executive) members and or Chair.*

## **Other events and activities**

- *Additional individual Region 6 member's Colin Grundy and Warren Jacobs were confirmed and welcomed.*
- *Region 6 Chair, Cr. Rebbeck was confirmed as MDA Vice president - Southern Basin.*
- *The November 2020 meeting with Sir Angus Houston, Chairman of the Murray Darling Basin Authority – was cancelled due to the Parafield Covid-19 Cluster and State-wide shutdown.*
- *The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board is making changes to the Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse. The proposed changes will only affect holders of an ELMA (Class 8) licence. Copies of the draft plan and supplementary material can be viewed on the Boards website. The consultation closed 2 December 2020.*
- *Region 6 Executive Officer Nathan Bicknell has started an additional part-time role with the MDBA as Regional Coordination Officer – Lower Murray (Goolwa).*
- *Region 6 took the opportunity to write to Minister Pitt to welcome him to his new portfolio and acknowledge his strong leadership at the November MINCO 2020.*
- *We have been involved in consultation on the proposed MDA name change.*
- *Region 6 will continue to liaise with MDA staff to help facilitate the local BCLP program (March 2021) and the potential for our symposium and barrage tour at a similar time; and*
- *We have also pencilled in our diaries a SA MDA meeting with the LGA.*

## **Key issues and opportunities**

- *Further regional opinion regarding the proposed MDA name change will be discussed at the February meeting 2021.*
- *Region 6 will confirm its calendar of events (including the proposed symposium and barrage tour) at the February meeting 2021; and*
- *We are looking to connect and collaborate with the new South Australian regional Landscape Boards (formerly NRM Boards).*

## **Region 8**

**Cr Brian Lockyer:** *Region 8 had a brilliant meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, with some really informative presentations. Thank you to Geoff Brock MP for his opening comments and thank you to the group from SA Water, Gavin Helgeland and Melissa Rebbeck for their presentations. Region 8 AGM will occur in February / March 2021. I would also like to extend my appreciation and thanks to Mr Simon Millcock, CEO of Legatus and outgoing secretariat, for his support and guidance in region 8.*

## **Region 9**

**Cr Paul Maytom:** *Region 9 met on Wednesday 2 December 2020. The key items at the meeting were:-*

- *A presentation from WaterNSW on the Murrumbidgee Valley Operations. The presentation included dam storage, inflows, climatic outlook, storage, and water allocation forecasts, as well as information on the Inter Valley Transfer (IVT) Account and River Transmission Loss. I would like this presentation to be distributed to board members.*
- *Discussion on the MDA name change consultation process.*
- *The Lake Coolah/Mejum Project being advocated by David Farley. Emma Bradbury has subsequently reviewed with MDBA and recommended that MDA does not commit resources to advocating for the proposal, at this stage.*

**Key Issues and Opportunities**

- *In early 2021, Region 9 will be seeking to work with WaterNSW on their 20-year Infrastructure Options Study to continue to identify and determine priorities with water infrastructure in NSW.*
- *The following Murrumbidgee allocation announcements were welcomed on 1 December 2020:-*
  - o *General Security - 76%*
  - o *High security – 95%*

*The next water allocation statement will be published on 15 December 2020. It will be a comprehensive statement, including indicative improvements in general security allocations under various possible inflow scenarios. The high General Security allocation and recent rainfalls are a boost for cereal crops, farmers and employment and has been a real positive for community confidence.*

**Action:** MDA executive to distribute Region 9 presentation to board members.

**Region 10A**

**Cr Craig Davies:** *Thanks for this opportunity. Clearly 10A is in a unique situation. We were part of a larger area of 10 and now we are moving towards instating a smaller area. This is an area that would cover our joint organisations of council which I chair. There is good will among six councils here to get back on board with the MDA and that it is imperative for us to be involved in this organisation. Our main focus at this point in time is still the over-recovered water from the Macquarie amounts to 92,000 megs. It's good to be back and thanks for this opportunity.*

**Region 12**

**Cr Samantha O'Toole:** *We haven't had a specific region meeting but I have been at a number of meetings where we had joint councils that discuss a number of water issues. We recently had a Darling Downs South West Mayors meeting, which covers a similar region to region 12, there was a Queensland government project announcement for \$3 million worth of feasibility study for Toowoomba, Darling Downs, Goondiwindi, Southern Downs, Western Downs councils to do a joint infrastructure project to provide urban water supply across the region. Another meeting I attended recently was the lower Balonne round table that has every federal and state department that covers the Balonne area – there was some frustration around the delays around the Northern Basin toolkit projects.*

**Motion:** That the Chairman's report, finance reports, Chief Executive Officers report and region reports are noted.  
M Rebbeck / S O'Toole Carried

**3.5. Communication and Briefing reports**

**3.5.1 Delegates Report – received and noted**

E Bradbury encouraged all board members to table the delegates report in front of all their councils. E Bradbury also highlighted the lead story of the report regarding the CSIRO and signing agreement, noting that the board should be immensely pleased with this as it reflects strongly on organisation's commitment to science and education.

D Thurley also noted the meeting with Rene Woods of MLDRIN, who has been appointed as the permanent indigenous representative on MDBA board. D Thurley congratulated Rene.

**Motion:** That the board write to Rene Woods and congratulate him on his appointment to the board of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

D Thurley / S O'Toole

Carried

**Action:** MDA to write letter of congratulations to Rene Woods for his appointment to the board of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority

### 3.5.2 Submission to the NSW Border Rivers: Floodplain harvesting in water sharing plans

E Bradbury provided a briefing to the board, noting that NSW is currently undertaking consultation on a range of water reform issues. E Bradbury also noted that those water reform issues are highly complex, highly inter-related and very difficult to distinguish.

E Bradbury noted both written and verbal communication and engagement with the Department has been ongoing in relation to their current round of consultation, noting that feedback has gone to all consultations in this place. Further feedback has been provided on the following issues:

- That the MDA submission on Border Rivers Regional Floodplain Harvesting can be taken as read to apply equally to all WRSs and WSPs currently out on consultation.
- That the MDA has concerns regarding a degree of inflexibility, the complexity, the timelines and the volume of plans currently out for consultation during a period when councils and agencies such as ours and other peaks are exceedingly busy and are resource poor.
- That the MDA feels that the tensions and inconsistencies in the policy development and consultation process are not consistent with the Dept's objective to build confidence or trust in the outcomes.
- That the MDA is concerned that 10 years' worth of work (ie development of balanced FPH regulation and integrated and sustainable Water Sharing Plans) cannot be fairly or adequately 'pushed through' in a 6-18 month time period,
- That the tensions and inconsistencies described above unfairly undermine some excellent work and commitment by many individuals within the department, and further erode community confidence in the process and the outcomes; and
- That the MDA is concerned that there has been inadequate attention paid to legitimate concerns raised by the community in relation to key elements of the FPH regulation and has recommended that the department prepare and circulate a fact sheet addressing the concerns raised.
- That the MDA acknowledge and appreciate the time afforded the MDA in discussing these concerns, and we look forward to working with the department to support them being addressed and resolved.

These concerns have been discussed with the following DPIE personnel and consultants

- Scott Keyworth - Director Healthy Floodplains Project
- Dan Connor - Director, Healthy Floodplains Project Delivery
- Peter Hansen - Water Relationships, Office of the Deputy and Strategic Relations
- Tom Chesson – Water Advisor to Minister Pavey
- Nous Consulting (undertaking a stocktake of trust and transparency in water administration in NSW.)

P Maytom noted that last week the Murray River Strategy Group had a presentation from Dan Connor. P Maytom noted that it was good presentation, but a lot of questions come from that, more questions than answers. P Maytom also questioned as to who was invited, and whether the MDA received an invitation.

**Action:** MDA executive to send Floodplain Harvesting Briefing paper to the board members for their general awareness.

D Thurley noted that messaging for DPIE NSW is confusing and needs to be clearer.

C Davies agreed with E Bradbury and D Thurley, noting his concerns regarding inconsistencies in messaging from DPIE NSW including NRAR. C Davies also noted that consulting needed a greater emphasis on listening. C Davies noted that this has created frustration within the region.

C Davies received an email regarding overland flows, noting that if landowners wish to be involved in any pumping they need to seek legal advice. C Davies expressed frustration at the expectations placed on community, rather than clear and direct, reliable advice from the government and the regulator.

S O'Toole agreed, and noted concerns that farmers have to get their own legal advice. S O'Toole noted that the emails contain an escalating level of complexity and jargon.

**Motion:** That the MDA write to Minister Pavey to

- a) Outline the concerns detailed in the preceding item
- b) Note the difficulties inherent in an increasingly complex network of water agencies in NSW
- c) Invite the Minister and her Department to work with the MDA to address those concerns
- d) Invite the Minister and her Department to work with the MDA to develop a standardised consultation framework and consistent timeline, and
- e) Assure the Minister that the MDA is committed to supporting the Department to achieve trust and transparency in water administration in NSW, for the enduring benefit of Basin communities.

M Rebbeck / P Maytom

Carried

### 3.5.3 MDA Financial Membership current list

D Thurley noted that following local government elections in Victoria recently he would approach Wodonga Council to provide a presentation regarding MDA membership.

B Lockyer also noted that he would begin a membership drive with E Bradbury in Region 8 in the new year.

### 3.5.4 Water NSW 20 Infrastructure Options Study

*J MacAllister joined the meeting at 11.10am*

E Bradbury provided a briefing to the board and noted that the MDA has contacted Brendan McRandle at National Water Infrastructure Authority to invite the development of a high level consistency across those infrastructure programs currently in place or in process.

M Rebbeck noted that these conversations are encouraging and asked if the MDA could take a greater role in leading discussions on this.

E Bradbury noted that she has written to the CEO Brendan McRandle requesting a first meeting in order to take initiative to set up further discussions.

**Motion:** That the reports are noted.

B Lockyer / P Maytom

Carried

## 4. CORRESPONDENCE

### 4.1. Correspondences Out

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.1.1	Mayor Craig Davies	Invitation to Attend Board Meetings
4.1.2	The Hon Mark Coulton MP	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.3	The Hon Sussan Ley MP	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.4	The Hon Michael McCormack MP	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.5	The Hon Keith Pitt MP	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.6	Basin Officials Committee	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.7	MINCO	76 <sup>TH</sup> National Conference Motions
4.1.8	Sir Angus Houston - MDBA	2021 National Conference
4.1.9	Federation Council	Approval request to transfer to Region 2
4.1.10	CEO – Peter Cullen Trust	Appointment of new CEO
4.1.11	Mayor Christine Weller – Campaspe Shire Council	Welcome Letter
4.1.12	Deputy Mayor Leanne Pentreath – Campaspe Shire Council	Welcome Letter
4.1.13	Mr Colin Grundy – Region 6 Individual Member	Welcome Letter
4.1.14	Mr Warren Jacobs – Region 6 Individual Member	Welcome Letter
4.1.15	MDA Life members	Annual Report and Strategic Plan 2025
4.1.16	Mayor Angela Evans - President LGASA	Response letter to Change of Name
4.1.17	Lord Mayor the Hon Kon Vatskalis President LGANT	Response letter to Change of Name
4.1.18	Dr Mat Gilfedder, Senior Research Scientist, Sustainable Groundwater Futures Land and Water. CSIRO	Support Letter: Empowering citizen responses to environmental change through data dialogues
4.1.19	Mr Brendan McRandle – National Water Grid Authority	Motion 5.15 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.20	The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Luke O’Sullivan Department of Infrastructure	Motion 5.15 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.21	Ms Fiona Simson President National Farmers Federation	Motion 5.2 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.22	The Hon Minister Littleproud	Motion 5.2 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.23	The Hon Dan Tehan MP Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.24	The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.25	The Hon John Gardner MP Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.26	Blair Boyer MP Shadow Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.27	The Hon. James Merlino, Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.28	The Hon David Hodggett, Shadow Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.29	The Hon Sarah Mitchell, MLC, Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.30	Ms Prue Prudence Ann Car MP , Shadow Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.31	The Hon Grace Grace MP Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference
4.1.32	Dr Christian Rowan MP Shadow Minister for Education	Motion 5.17 76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference

J MacAllister asked about life members not being included in the MDA Financial Members current list. Current list, as requested is a list of financial members. Life members are not financial members.

**Action:** Chairs to refer to successive annual reports, or contact office for details of life members if required.

M Rebbeck asked for an update on the MDA proposed name-change.

D Thurley provided an update regarding further meetings with LGNSW and LGAQ, as well as LGASA.

## 4.2 Correspondences In

<i>Item</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Topic</i>
4.2.1	LGASA – President Mayor Angela Evans	Name Change Consultation
4.2.2	Wentworth Shire Council	Pooncarie Weir
4.2.3	Lord Mayor the Hon Kon Vatskalis President LGANT	MDA Name Change Consultation
4.2.4	Cr Linda Scott, President LGNSW	MDA Name Change Consultation
4.2.5	Whyalla Council	MDA Name Change Consultation
4.2.6	Goondawindi Council	MDA Name Change Consultation

J MacAllister asked if the MDA would be writing letters of welcome to all newly elected Victorian mayors following the recent election. E Bradbury answered that the MDA would be in the new year.

**Motion:** That the Board receive correspondence.

D Thurley / M Rebbeck

Carried

*G Helgeland arrived at 11.30am*

**Motion:** That the MDA move Item 7 forward.

J MacAllister / C Davies

Carried

## 5. GUEST PRESENTATION

**11-30am Mr Gavin Helgeland – Balranald Council, Executive Member – Region 4**

*Yanga Lake – Murrumbidgee River e-Water Optimisation Project: Improving Connectivity*

**Motion:** Subject to the brief and letter received by Balranald Shire, that the MDA write

- A letter of support to Balranald Shire Council commending the Yanga Creek Offtake, Murrumbidgee River Optimisation project for inclusion in the SDLAM Projects
- To Ministers Pavey and Ley and SDLAM Projects team recommending the inclusion of the Yanga Creek Offtake, Murrumbidgee River Optimisation project for inclusion in the SDLAM Projects
- Write to the Commonwealth Environment Water Office inviting them to partner with Balranald / MDA to quantify the savings

J MacAllister / B Thomas

Carried

E Bradbury thrilled to see this presentation regionally and at board level. E Bradbury also noted that it is an opportunity to model successful SDLAM project development strategies generated at local government level.

M Rebbeck noted that it was great to have a look at big water saving plans and presentations on how much water has been saved.

## 6. BUSINESS ARISING

### 6.1. Review of actions table

MDA Matters in Progress arising from previous Meetings

Board to review the motions arising and actions completed



**Motion:** That the Board note updates  
B Lockyer / P Maytom

Carried

P Maytom noted that the proposed name-change was discussed at Leeton Shire Council, which will be forwarded onto the MDA.

*P Maytom left the meeting at 12pm.*

## **6.2. BUDGET**

### **6.2.1. Draft Budget Scenario's**

Preparations for finalisation of the 2021/2022 budget have commenced with the establishment of the Draft Budget including a range of scenario's with and without expected project funding realised.

**Motion:** That the Board await presentation of final budget draft at or before February 2021  
J MacAllister / B Lockyer

Carried

### **6.2.2. Membership Fees 2021/2022**

To prepare draft budget, some direction on the increase or otherwise of membership fee's is required.

Invoicing for membership fees for the 2021/2022 membership year will be due to be calculated and prepared for distribution to councils and members on or before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. Membership fees for period 2020/2021 remained unchanged from the previous financial year period 2019/2020 due to the extraordinary events which occurred in 2020. To acknowledge the post COVID economy and to encourage membership continuity, it was recommended that the MDA refrain from increasing membership fees.

A deemed CPI increase of 2.5% equates to an increase of \$ \$5,839.166 in revenue, assuming membership remains consistent with 2021. An actual CPI increase of 0.7% equates to an increase of \$1,634.966 in revenue, assuming membership remains consistent with 2021.

**Motion:** That

1. The fees for Membership to the MDA for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 remain unchanged from 2020/21 period in recognition of financial hardship on rural communities due to COVID and to assist in the recovery of their economies.
2. Fees for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 are set as follows

Local Government entity	\$0.305 cents per head of population, capped at \$6,681.82 (ex GST). Under this pricing, the cap benefits councils with a population exceeding 21,900
Non-local government entity	\$350 (ex GST)
Individual	\$90 (ex GST)
Life Member	no fee

Membership fees for new members will be pro-rata, with an annual renewal date of 1 April.

C Davies / J MacAllister

Carried

## **6.3. Change of Name Consultation**

E Bradbury noted that consultation is progressing with surveys returning.

The MDA's National President and CEO have attended meetings regarding the consultation process with:

- LGNSW, (Ms Linda Scott, Mr Scott Phillips and Mr Shaun McBride)  
It was noted that the consultation with LG NSW had been professional, respectful and collaborative – conducive to building stronger relationship and opportunities into the future.
- LGASA, (CEO Mr Matt Pinnegar, Cr Melissa Rebbeck, Cr Brian Lockyer, Cr Tilley)

It was noted that the consultation with LGA SA has been handled by the CEO alone, with the President an apology.

- LGAQ, (CEO Mr Greg Hallam)

It was noted that the consultation with the LGAQ had been constructive, with Mr Hallam indicating the view that this was a matter for the MDA.

E Bradbury commended the staff and process of putting together the Frequently Asked Questions. E Bradbury noted that this is a rapidly evolving document, as it responds to questions and concerns as they arise.

J MacAllister commended the great work the team has done. J MacAllister noted, however, that there is considerable reputational risk that is already being incurred to pit ourselves against all of the Local government associations. J MacAllister recommended that the MDA should include information about reputational risk in the Frequently Asked Questions document.

D Thurley agreed but also noted that at this stage there is no sense that the MDA is *putting the MDA against the other Local Government Associations*.

**Action:** MDA to include wording on reputational risk in proposed name-change FAQ document.

B Lockyer noted his disappointment in not being consulted by other LGAs in the process, or that they had taken an informed position.

Cr Rebbeck also expressed concern that she had not been consulted by her council or LGA in the process before them forming a position.

M Rebbeck asked for clarification on when the consultation process finishes, and how chairs can better support the process.

E Bradbury noted that the consultation process has been extended until the motion submission closing date, with the MDA guided by the consultation process itself.

E Bradbury noted that it is incumbent upon board members to point out where there are inconsistencies within the LGA sector and their opposition to the change, while still maintaining respectful, collaborative and supportive relationships.

J MacAllister asked how the MDA can better support region chairs to navigate discussions around the name-change.

D Thurley said that is important for board members to be actively listening during the consultation process. D Thurley said all we can do is keep listening to feedback.

S O'Toole noted that she would follow up with members from the LGAQ.

E Bradbury encouraged all chairs to ensure that all views and perspectives in the consultation are afforded the opportunity to be heard, not just the loud minority.

#### **6.4. Pooncarie Weir**

Board reviewed correspondence sent and received.

J MacAllister declared an interest and said she would abstain from voting.

D Thurley provided an overview of the situation.

**Motion:** That the MDA

1. Note the response from Wentworth Shire Council
2. Note the efforts made by the Wentworth Shire Council to have NSW State Government assume

ownership of the Pooncarie Weir Infrastructure.

3. Support Wentworth Shire Council's endeavours to return ownership of the asset and regulation of waterway structure to Water NSW.

D Thurley / M Rebbeck

Carried

#### 6.5. Deliverability Shortfall Risk and options for bypassing the Barmah Choke

[\*Managing Delivery Risks in the River Murray System\*](#), written by the independent panel for the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and released 12 November 2020. Board noted email from CEO on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Concern was expressed at the absence of detail contained in the report on who the independent panel members were who created the report and also the absence of any detail on options for bypassing the Barmah Choke or on works required to achieve that.

Emma provided a briefing on her assessment of the report including feedback from Commissioner Jane Doolan.

J MacAllister noted that the Ministerial Council requested more information in December last year around constraints and there was an initial report that came out in response to that:

[https://industry.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/285626/Murray-Darling-Basin-constraints-modelling-report.pdf](https://industry.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/285626/Murray-Darling-Basin-constraints-modelling-report.pdf)

**Motion:** That the MDA write to the independent panel for the MDBA in specific reference to *Managing Delivery Risks in the River Murray System* seeking the following information:

- a) Details on all and any of the options being considered for restoring or bypassing the Barmah Choke
- b) Details of the proposed consultation process on all and any options
- c) Details of all and any of the works for which contracts are being currently developed as detailed in Figure 9 on page 23 of the [report](#).

J MacAllister / B Thomas

Carried

## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 6.1 Individual Membership Applications

*At the MDA Region 7 meeting on 26 November 2020 the members of Region 7 received an application for Individual Membership for Linda Yates, and made the following recommendation to the MDA Board:*

#### 9.1 New Independent Member Application

MOVED Chair, Cr Tilley

That Region 7 recommends to the Murray Darling Association Board that the application from Lynda Yates, Holdfast Bay be accepted.

SECONDED Cr John Kennedy

CARRIED

**Motion:** That the Board accepts the Region Executive's recommendation that the membership application of Lynda Yates of Holdfast Bay be accepted.

B Lockyer / M Rebbeck

Carried

### 6.2 Membership – Immediate Past Chairs

To support continuity of knowledge and experience it was recommended that the status of Immediate Past Chair's be acknowledged and supported. This also aligns with closing out Motion 5.10 from 2019 AGM

**Motion:** That the Board:

- a) Acknowledge the importance of the role of the Immediate Past Region Chair, in providing continuity and support to the region
- b) Affirm the status of the Immediate Past Region Chair
- c) Approve membership of the Immediate Past Region Chair at no cost for a period of 1 year
- d) Afford the immediate past chair one vote at the National Conference as a delegate of the region.

D Thurley / S O'Toole

Carried

### 6.3 CSIRO and MDA Relationship Agreement

The official signing of the MDA / CSIRO Relationship Agreement, took place in Canberra on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the first agreement of its kind for local government in Australia

The Relationship Agreement aligns strongly with Pillar 2: Science and Education in the MDA's Vision 2025: Strategic Plan.

J MacAllister asked whether the call for a representative to sit on an advisory group for this was still ongoing.

E Bradbury noted that a draft TOR for that group will be developed in collaboration with the CSIRO.

**Motion:** That the Board note the agreement.

C Davies / J MacAllister

Carried

Action: MDA to schedule a meeting with CSIRO to develop TOR for advisory group.

## 8. MDA National Conference

### 8.1 Conference 2021 – Wentworth

On 15 September, the MDBA announced that it will be hosting the first annual Murray–Darling Basin Conference in Mildura in July 2021 and continuing annual conferences from different locations in the Basin. In March, this year it was announced that the MDA's 77th National Conference and AGM is scheduled to be held in Wentworth in August.

On 20 November, the MDA wrote to the MDBA expressing concern at the risks to the MDA's conference that this posed and invited the MDBA to explore options to support both events without the adverse impact on our organisation of a duplicate conference.

To that, the MDA has prepared to move the conference forward to late May, and the MDBA has prepared to move their conference to another location.

The Executive team established the Event Planning Guide which has assisted the Committee Planning members to discuss and confirm the following:

a) Theme: **Connectivity**

- Theme Slogan: Connecting Councils and Catchments
- By-Line: *"Putting communities at the heart of the Basin Plan"*

b) **Dates**

Following an analysis of parliamentary sitting dates, LGA conferences and other key dates, and in consultation with the Wentworth Shire Council the dates for the 2021 National Conference has now been set:

***Monday 17th to Wednesday 19 May 2021, subject to confirmation – Board Members may like to consider holding a board meeting and informal dinner on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021***

**c) Proposed Order of events**

<b>Events</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Proposed date</b>
Board Meeting	Day 0	Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Informal Dinner	Day 0	Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Study Tour	Day 1	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Civic Reception	Day 1	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Conference Speaker Sessions	Day 2	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Gala Dinner	Day 2	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Partner Tour	Day 2	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Conference (Morning)	Day 3	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Annual General Meeting	Day 3	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
Visit to the Junction – Close of Conference	Day 3	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021

M Rebbeck asked for further information regarding the strategic planning workshop.

E Bradbury noted that strategic planning workshop will occur later in the year.

**Motion:** That the Board:

- a) note the Theme and Order of events for the 2021 National Conference
- b) Approve the holding the board meeting on day 0 / bump in day

B Lockyer/ M Rebbeck

**Action:** MDA executive will circulate national conference dates once confirmed in late January 2021.

**8.2 Call for Motions – National Conference 2021**

Guide for the submission of motions to the MDA National Conference and AGM

The MDA Executive team have developed a guide to assist Regions with their submissions for next year's National Conference, which will be a template for future conferences. The Executive hopes this guide assists.

<b>Call for Motions open:</b>	4 January 2021
<b>Accepting of Motions closes</b>	12 April 2021
<b>MDA National Conference and AGM:</b>	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

E Bradbury commended James on his great work and noted that this document should better support chairs as a guidance pathway for submission of motions.

**Motion:** That the board note the Guide for the submission of motions to the MDA National Conference and AGM document

C Davies / B Thomas

Carried

**8.3 Conference 2022**

Tender Process Guidelines:

*Submissions are now open for interested regions to host the Murray Darling Association (MDA) 78<sup>th</sup> National Conference and AGM in 2022.*

*To submit a tender for the 2022 National Conference, eligible regions should have a resolution recorded in the minutes of their region meeting and should also include a letter of support from the proposed hosting council.*

Regions have expressed interest in receiving previous tender applications to support their own submission.

J McAllister noted that creativity may be impacted by allowing councils to view previous submissions and therefore recommended that these remain unseen.

M Rebbeck agreed and also requested an extension to the deadline, if possible.

E Bradbury said the deadline could be extended to end of March 2021.

**Motion:** Board to:

- a) Note submission for hosting of the National Conference 2022 is now open until end of March 2021
- b) Does Not support the distribution of past applications for tendering councils.

D Thurley/C Davies

Carried

## **9. STRATEGY**

### **9.1 The Strategic Advisory Committee met 1 December 2020**

Minutes of Meeting 00011

J MacAllister noted her concerns about the committee, highlighting that attendance is low. J MacAllister asked whether it is worth continuing with the strategic advisory committee, and that the MDA should revisit its purpose and whether it is fulfilling its function.

E Bradbury spoke highly of the committee but noted it may be good to reflect on membership of the committee itself.

**Motion:** That the Board note the Minutes of Meeting 00011

D Thurley / B Lockyer

Carried

**Action:** MDA executive to provide a briefing paper on the Strategic Advisory Committee for the next board meeting.

### **9.2 Annual Strategic Planning Workshop**

Previously scheduled for February 2021 in Moama. As the 77<sup>th</sup> National Conference is now being held in May 2021, The Annual Strategic Planning Workshop will now be held later in the 2021 year. CEO to update and discuss with the board.

*M Rebbeck left at 12.51pm*

## **10. Items from the Regions.**

Our Region: Informing the Board Agenda

### **10.1 LGNSW Executive Certificate for Elected Members Accreditation Course**

Item from Region 11 – Cr John Campbell

Seeking Feedback from other regions:

*Refer to Section 4.1.2 of Vision 2025 Value proposition for Councillors and Council Staff*

**Motion:** That Item 4.1.2 of Vision 2025 be amended at its annual review to include a range of options to support the accreditation of elected members.

J MacAllister / C Davies

Carried

## **11. CLOSE at 12.51pm**