



Chief Executive Officer's Report

March 2019

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1. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
01/02/2019	Presentation RAMJO GM's meeting	Moama, NSW
01/02/2019	Board Meeting 383	Moama, NSW
01/02/2019	Strategic Planning Workshop (1-3 Feb)	Moama, NSW
08/02/2019	EMFM Radio – monthly program	Moama, NSW
13/02/2019	Address National Irrigators Council dinner	Swan Hill, Vic
15/02/2019	Region 6 AGM -Goolwa	Zoom
15/02/2019	DoI Water/MDA/LGNSW Re: engagement local gov't – Sydney	Zoom
19/02/2019	Introduction to the Rice Industry – leadership address	Deniliquin, NSW
19/02/2019	Planning Committee Meeting Nat Con - Toowoomba	Zoom
22/02/2019	Connecting Catchments and Communities	Renmark, SA
28/02/2019	Region 7 Ordinary Meeting – Adelaide	Zoom
04/03/2019	MDBA – Finalise draft MOU – Canberra	Zoom
06/03/2019	Buloke Shire Council presentation	Sea Lake, Vic
08/03/2019	EMFM Radio – monthly Program	Echuca, Vic
12/03/2019	Region 11 ordinary meeting – Tenterfield	Zoom
13/03/2019	NRAR Board Meeting – guest: Sydney	Zoom
15/03/2019	Darling Downs and SW Qld Council of Mayors	Dalby, Qld
18/03/2019	River Connections Grant Application consortium meeting	Zoom

2. Engagements

2.1 RAMJO GM's Meeting

Presentation to RAMJO GM's meeting to provide an update on MDA projects and priorities. Welcome new CEO Bridgett Leopold, Executive Officer who replaces Ray Stubbs, Acting EO.

2.2 Strategic Planning Workshop

More than 55 community leaders from 28 councils across all four states, of the Murray Darling Basin met for the 5th annual Murray Darling Association Strategic Planning workshop. The three-day event saw a gathering of mayors, councillors and senior executives of councils from all 12 MDA regions.

Preliminary notes are attached, with a draft strategic plan to be circulated in advance of the Board Meeting 385.

2.3 National Irrigators Council Dinner – Swan Hill

2.4 DoI Water/MDA/LGNSW Re: engagement local gov't

Meeting with DOI Water and LGNSW on progressing a project in relation to developing a community consultation standard. DoI to present a proposal – but now in caretaker. Discussions will resume post election.

2.5 Introduction to the Rice Industry – Leadership address

Excellent opportunity.

2.6 Connecting Catchments and Communities

Connecting Catchments and Communities – MDA inter-regional workshops

MDA Regions 4-5 held a very successful workshop/forum in Renmark on the 22nd February 2019, with the purpose to facilitate further education and information on the topic of river health and connectivity from Menindee to the Coorong.

Identified as the first in an ongoing series of events that the MDA will run titled ***Connecting Catchments and Communities***. The workshops will be presented as inter-regional events, aimed at enhancing water literacy and exchanging information across the Basin.

Topics for the coming year include:

- **Albury to Adelaide** - exploring topics of inflows and urban water use, planning, flood management etc.
- **Balonne to Broken Hill** – exploring topics of irrigation in the Northern Basin, Barwon-Darling water sharing plan etc
- **Moirra to Mildura** – exploring issues of constraints, management of the Barmah choke, impact of expanding the irrigation footprint to permanent plantings below The Choke, total capacity and supply obligations etc.
- **Naran Lake to Nyngan** – Managing the Macquarie Marshes – exploring the relationship between the irrigation, the SDLs and ephemeral wetlands of the interior.
- Etc...

Feedback from the event was exceptionally positive from both attendees and presenters.

2.7 Buloke Shire Council Presentation

Travelled to Sea Lake to address Buloke Shire Council. Cr David Pollock has represented Buloke Shire Council at a number of MDA events recently. Subsequent to the presentation, Cr Pollock will represent the Bullock Shire at board meeting 384 as a guest,.

2.8 NRAR Board Meeting – guest: Sydney

Attended NRAR Board Meeting. Natural Resources Access Regulator – Provided a presentation seeking feedback on their Approach to regulatory priorities

NRAR's ongoing program of activities and specific projects is based on an analysis of the potential impact and likelihood of non-compliance. This means the focus of activities will be on areas where there would be material environmental and hydrological consequences if there was non-compliance, and where there is high likelihood of non-compliance occurring.

NRAR CEO Grant Barnes also provided a brief of the regulator's actions and activities:

- Since 30 April 2018, NRAR has received over 4000 enquiries through their hotline; resulting in 650 alleged breaches reported.
- When coupled with inherited legacy cases, this amounts to over 1200 investigations.
- 600 of these investigations have been finalised and approximately half of these resulted in some form of compliance action (Advisory Letters, PINs, Cautions. etc)
- NRAR has issued ~40 statutory directions, addressing continuing harm, as well as ~40 Penalty Infringement Notices.
- NRAR has commenced 6 prosecutions, with 3 having resulted in guilty verdicts (and 3 continuing).

NRAR were provided with a copy of the letter sent to the NSW DPC regarding economic activation plans as a potential emerging risk of future non-compliance.

2.9 Darling Downs and SW Qld Council of Mayors

Presentation to Darling Downs and SW Qld Council of Mayors in Dalby. That group includes

Mayor John Ferguson	Bulloo Shire Council
Mayor Stuart Mackenzie	Quilpie Shire Council
Mayor Lindsay Godfrey	Paroo Shire Council (Deputy Chair)
Mayor Annie Liston	Murweh Shire Council
Mayor Richard Marsh	Balonne Shire Council
Mayor Tyson Golder	Maranoa Regional Council
Mayor Graeme Scheu	Goondiwindi Regional Council
Mayor Paul McVeigh	Western Downs Regional Council
Mayor Tracy Dobie	Southern Downs Regional Council
Mayor Paul Antonio	Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) (Chair)

Discussions emerged on the opportunity for region 12 meetings to dovetail with that group, consistent with current strategy.

A briefing at the meeting by ARTC / Inland Rail providing an update on the inland rail project identified a number of synergies and opportunities to partner, particularly in relation to their social performance program. National Conference 2019 **presentation** opportunity. Discussions to continue.

Mayor Richard Marsh presented the MDA Conference Trophy to Toowoomba Mayor Paul Antonio.

2.10 River Connections Grant Application consortium meeting

The MDA is assembling a consortium and preparing an EOI in application for up to \$9M over 10 years under the NSW Environmental Trust River Connections contestable grant program. Further information including program guidelines and application form here <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/river-connections.htm>. Applications close on Monday 25th March at 3.00pm

Objectives we need to meet

1. To establish partnerships that align a range of river users with diverse values into a common purpose to improve river health, that will continue beyond the program and its funding.
2. To trial new approaches or combinations of approaches to integrated river management and connectivity that deliver improved health outcomes for inland rivers.
3. To create an incentive for coordinated activities that contribute to improved river health.

Identified/prospective consortium partners:

- Murray-Darling Association
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- National Irrigators Council & NSW Irrigators Council
- National Farmers Federation & NSW Farmers Federation
- Landcare?
- Conservation focussed groups? (Invasive Species Council, Australian Conservation Foundation)
- Charles Sturt University – Institute of Land and Water Studies (leading monitoring and evaluation)

3 Update on AGM Resolutions

Little progress on any resolutions across the Christmas, early new year period.

4 National Conference

Regular planning meetings of the National Conference planning committee will resume in February.

5 Staffing

James Marshall commences an internship 3 days a week with the MDA on 25/03/2019. James is currently studying Bachelor of Commerce with Latrobe University. James also has a particular interest in Ag Science.

Applications for the position of Executive Assistant to the CEO have been called on Seek. So far the posting has attracted 18871 search views, 883 Job views and 12 applications. Applications close Friday 29th March 2019.



Emma Bradbury

Chief Executive Officer