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# 2017 Planning Workshop and Board Meeting 363

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**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017**  
**LGA House, 148 Frome Street, Adelaide**

Time	Activity
8.30 – 9.00	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Opening welcome LGA SA President Cr Lorraine Rosenberg – Mayor City of Onkaparinga CEO Matt Pinnegar</li><li>Region Chairs: Introductions</li><li>CEO: Objectives of the Workshop</li></ul>
9.00 – 10.30	Session 1 - Regional Issues Map Facilitator: Emma Bradbury
10.30 - 10.45	Morning Tea
10.45 – 11.15	Session 2 – Regional Boundaries Facilitator: Emma Bradbury
11.15 – 12.30	Session 3 - Finance Planning Facilitator: Peter Gray
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 3.00	Session 4 – Work Plan 2017 Facilitator: Emma Bradbury
3.00 – 3.20	Afternoon tea
3.20 – 3.30	Summation and review
3.45 – 4.45	MDA Board Meeting 363
4.45	Conclusion



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# 2017 Planning Workshop

## Session 1 - Regional Issues Map

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### Session Objectives

- To establish the process for the development of the Regional Issues Map
  - To agree a consistent framework to guide the content
  - To understand the role of the region chairs in driving the process
  - To understand the role of the region meetings in informing a quality product
- 

### Alignment to Strategy:

Goal: To facilitate informed and constructive debate

Strategic Objective #2: To create a shared understanding of the issues and priorities across the regions.

### Linkages:

Strategic Plan 2016 -19  
Resolution of the AGM  
Work Plan 2017  
Board KPI's  
CEO KPI's

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### Background

The MDA Strategic Plan 2016-19 states at item 2.6 p13

#### **2.6 REGIONAL ISSUES**

*As an Association, we share the vision of a healthy Murray Darling Basin that supports thriving communities, economic development and sustainable productivity, and work together in our common purpose to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating debate, and seeking to influence government policy common.*

*We also recognise that our regions represent the interests, issues and circumstances of a wide array of*

*communities across a vast tract of the Australian continent. By working together to better understand the unique issues that define, challenge, and shape our regions, we are better able to inform policy and achieve shared solutions.*

*The development of our Issues Map, some of the key issues of which are noted below, will inform the strategic direction and define the work of our regions.*

## **Further, the membership of the MDA resolved Resolution of the 2016 AGM – Minutes extract**

### **5.5 Regional Issues Map**

#### **Background**

Local government across the Basin shares the vision of a healthy Murray Darling Basin. We all aspire to support the opportunity for economic growth and development, health, happy, vibrant people, and a sustainable natural and built environment.

How we achieve that aspiration will vary from council to council, region to region, state to state. We recognise that our regions represent the interests, issues and circumstances of a wide array of communities across a vast tract of the Australian continent.

The councils of the MDA work together to better understand the unique issues that define, challenge and shape our regions. In the year ahead, our regions will continue this work to develop regional strategic plans and advocacy priorities that will help inform policy and achieve shared solutions.

**Motion:** That the Murray Darling Association

a) notes an undertaking by the 12 regions of the Basin to develop Regional Strategies reports to address local issues as noted at item 2.6 of the Murray Darling Association Strategic Plan 2016-19,

b) will, through its region meetings support the contribution of informed content to identify and define regional issues, and

c) seeks funding to resource the development of these reports into Regional Strategic Plans.

**Moved:** Cr B Featherston/Cr F Tuckwell Carried

	Process
	<p>What is the process for developing the “Regional Issues Maps”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name – does the title “Regional Issues Map” clearly identify what the document is/what it does. Are these intended to be Regional Plans/ Strategies/Advocacy Priorities</li> <li>Timeline – when do we want them to be finalised/delivered.</li> <li>Input from the member councils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Call for papers from member councils – affirms they are the position of the council, not just the view of the delegate</li> <li>➤ Development and review/consultation</li> <li>➤ Adoption by the regions</li> <li>➤ Presentation to National Conference and endorsement by the Membership at the AGM</li> </ul> </li> <li>Final product and style guide - MDA</li> </ul>
	Content
	<p>It will be important that there is an element of consistency of format across the regions in the final product.</p>

	<p>The following framework or contents is proposed as a starting point. The content framework will need to reflect the purpose of the document (see first item in ‘process’ above.)</p> <p>Your input is important, so please think about what you want to see in this document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is this Document About</li> <li>▪ A bit about our Region # <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Boundaries</li> <li>➤ Local government areas in the region</li> <li>➤ Regional Profile</li> <li>➤ Member Councils</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Our Partners and Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ The Basin Plan – Impacts to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Positive</li> <li>➤ Adverse</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The Role of Local Government</li> <li>▪ Current Issues impacting our region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengths</li> <li>➤ Opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Healthy Local Communities</li> <li>➤ A Prosperous Region</li> <li>➤ Connected Communities</li> <li>➤ A Healthy Natural Environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Targeted Advocacy Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ .</li> <li>➤ .</li> <li>➤ .</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Beyond the Basin Plan... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where to from here</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Responsibilities</b></p>
	<p>This is a significant body of work, and will require active co-ordination by the Region Chairs and their chairing councils, quality input from member councils, and substantial work in sculpting the final daft, consulting with members and producing the final document. It will also provide an opportunity for Chairs to engage with and attract non-member councils.</p> <p>Responsibility for those parts of the process need to be identified, discussed and agreed. It is recommended that there be some element of accountability set, even if that is simply a requirement for chairs to report to the board on progress periodically</p>

	<p>KPIs need to be set to ensure alignment to and consistency with the Workplan. The Boards KPI's need to be SCRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic</li><li>• Consistent across the Regions</li><li>• Realistic</li><li>• Agreed</li><li>• Measurable</li></ul>
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# 2017 Planning Workshop

## Session 2 – Regional Boundaries

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### Session Objectives

- To establish the process for the review of Region Boundaries
  - To consider the principles against which the boundaries will be reviewed.
- 

### Alignment to Strategy:

Goal: To facilitate informed and constructive debate

Strategic Objective #2: To create a shared understanding of the issues and priorities across the regions.

Strategic Objective #1: To effectively advocate on behalf of our members.

### Linkages:

Strategic Plan 2016 -19  
Resolution of the AGM  
Work Plan 2017  
Board KPI's  
CEO KPI's

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### Background

At the 2016 AGM, the membership of the MDA passed the following resolution.

#### **5.6 Review of Regional Boundaries**

##### *Background*

*The MDA has 12 Regions across the Basin, covering 4 states & ACT. State borders are not defining boundaries, with our regions associated by councils reflecting common regional interests and shared ecologies. In order to ensure the strength of our regions, it is important that our member councils identify a strong alignment of interests within each region.*

*To ensure that our regional boundaries do reflect and achieve that objective, a review should be undertaken with the active engagement of our members and stakeholders.*

*The MDA is currently working with the Dept of Environment cartography team to provide up to date mapping.*

**Motion:** That the Murray Darling Association

a) undertake a body of work, in 2017/18 to review the regional boundaries in collaboration

with all member councils to ensure a continuation of alignment as communities of interest.

b) notes that the Murray Darling Association does not recognise state borders as defining regional boundaries.

**Moved:** Cr D Thurley/P Frost Carried

## Workshop Notes

	Process
	<p>What is the process for Reviewing the regional boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timeline – when do we want them to be finalised/delivered.</li><li>• Input from the member councils.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Call for papers from member councils – affirms they are the position of the council, not just the view of the delegate</li><li>➤ Development and review/consultation</li><li>➤ Adoption by the regions</li><li>➤ Presentation to National Conference and endorsement by the Membership at the AGM</li></ul></li></ul>
	Principles
	<p>What are the guiding principles regarding regional alignments?</p> <p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ distances,</li><li>➤ practicality,</li><li>➤ engagement,</li><li>➤ efficiency,</li><li>➤ expense to chairing councils.</li></ul> <p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Alignment with other agencies</li><li>➤ State borders</li><li>➤ Alignment to WRPs? (Water Resource Plans)</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Water resource plans (WRPs) set out how water resources will be managed. They are developed by the Basin states, or in certain circumstances by the Authority, for approval by the Commonwealth Water Minister.</li><li>▪ A water resource plan area is a geographical area, of which there are 14 for surface water, 16 for groundwater and an additional six for surface water and groundwater combined. As far as possible, the boundaries match those of existing state water management areas.</li></ul> <p><a href="#">Groundwater Resource Plan Map</a></p> <p><a href="#">Surface water Resource Plan Map</a></p>



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# 2017 Planning Workshop and Session 3 – Financial Planning

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**Facilitator:** *Peter Gray – via Skype*

## Session Objectives

- To review and adopt the **Terms of Reference for the Finance Subcommittee**
  - To review and adopt the MDA Financial Principles
  - To elect the Finance Subcommittee
- 

## Alignment to Strategy:

Goal: To be a strong, Viable, Self-sustaining organisation

## Linkages:

Constitution – Part 4, s7 Powers of the Board  
Part 4, S8 Composition of the Board  
Strategic Plan 2016 -19  
Resolution of the AGM  
Work Plan 2017  
Board KPI's  
CEO KPI's

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## Background

The Murray Darling Association's financial position has long been recognised as a parlous in nature, based on two key risks.

The first has been the quality and standard of our Financial Management practices, at both Board and executive level, and the second is the constant struggle to achieve sufficient revenues to meet the operating expenses necessary to deliver on our purpose and demonstrate value to our stakeholders.

Following a review of the organisation's performance that considered its viability and future in 2014, the MDA adopted a broad-based business recovery plan.



The review identified a number of financial management practices, both at board and executive level that posed an existential risk the organisation. Since that time, the MDA has worked hard to ensure that its financial operating and record keeping practices are disciplined, principled and consistent. Our annual financial audits have seen management letters strong in their support of developing internal practices.

The board is now provided with detailed, timely and regular reports and supporting narrative monthly. These reports provide the board with the information they need to develop a clear understanding of the organisation's financial performance and position.

With sound financial management practices now in place within the organisation, it is important that we actively turn our minds to the second element of our organisation's financial challenge – that of achieving sufficient revenues to meet the operating expenses necessary to deliver on our purpose and demonstrate value to our stakeholders.

Although profitability is not the core purpose of the MDA, it is necessary to ensure that we are sustainable, properly capitalised and funded. The MDA needs to ensure adequate cash flow to support our operations now and into the future, to ensure we can deliver on our purpose.

Sound financial management for our organisation also remains an important priority, allowing members and stakeholders to engage with confidence, and continuing to build confidence, capacity, and credibility.

With the MDA's objectives needing to be served by such a small team, it is important that the board has the tools and the opportunity to contribute to growing the financial capacity of the MDA.

	<b>Terms of Reference for the Finance Subcommittee</b>
	Draft Terms of Refence were distributed to the board for their consideration with the minutes of Board Meeting 362, on 06/12/2016. The proposed ToR are attached. Review/discuss/amend/endorse.
	To review and adopt the MDA Financial Principles
	<p>By implementing good financial management, and agreeing a number of set financial principles against which we operate, the MDA will be better able to deliver on our strategic goals in a financially sound manner.</p> <p>The following list is an example, or proposed set of Financial Planning Principles.</p> <p>It is the second objective of this workshop for the board to review these Financial Planning Principles, making amendments if required, prior to their adoption.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MDA to achieve sufficient revenues from memberships to meet the operating expenses necessary to deliver on our purpose and demonstrate value to our stakeholders</li> <li>2. MDA to meet core business obligations prior to allocating additional operating projects and events</li> <li>3. MDA to generate reasonable income from operating projects and events.</li> <li>4. MDA to develop and maintain commitment to the Financial Sustainability Strategy.</li> </ol>

	<p>5. MDA will not incur debt</p> <p>6. MDA's budget targets to be agreed and met each year.</p> <p>7. MDA to hold funds for 3/6/12 months operating expenses in cash reserve.</p> <p>8. MDA to approve projects and subsidiaries only after consideration of alignment to the organisations core purpose and strategic plan.</p> <p>9. MDA to remunerate staff commensurate with skill and performance at levels consistent with industry standards and in line with the expectations of the role.</p>
	<b>To elect the Finance Subcommittee</b>
	<p>Subject to any amendments to the draft ToR, the composition of the Finance Subcommittee will be</p> <p><b>Members</b></p> <p>The board will appoint finance subcommittee members and the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee must be non-executive and independent, and must not be the chair of the board. The finance subcommittee will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not more than four (4), not less than two (2) MDA Board members</li> <li>• MDA Chief Executive Officer</li> <li>• MDA Finance Officer</li> <li>• One qualified external specialist</li> </ul> <p>Board Members are encouraged to consider and discuss their capacity to contribute to meeting the goals of the committee, and support the development of Finance Strategy in due course.</p>
	<b>Budget 2017/18</b>
	<p>Preparation timelines</p> <p>Process</p> <p>Role of the committee</p> <p>Innovative thinking, opportunities.</p>

Further resources that may assist the board in their preparation for this session

[Financial management of not-for-profit organisations](#), November 2009 CPA Australia  
[GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND GUIDANCE for Not-for-Profit Organisations](#),  
 Australian Institute of Company Directors



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# 2017 Planning Workshop and Session 4 – Work Plan 2017

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## Session Objectives

- Annual review of the Strategic Plan
  - To develop the Work Plan 2017
    - To consider tasks and set performance indicators for the Board
    - To consider tasks and set performance indicators for the CEO
  - Workshop National Conference 2017 theme
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## Alignment to Strategy:

Strategic Plan 2016-19 Item 2.4, p11

## Linkages:

Strategic Plan 2016 -19  
Work Plan 2017  
Board KPI's  
CEO KPI's

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## Background

Strategic Plan 2016-19 Item 2.4, p11 states

*The combined council of regional chairs...forms the board of management of the Murray Darling Association. It is the role of the board of management to set the strategy for the organisation.*

*Specific performance indicators, as set by the board of management annually will assist in prioritising the CEO's direction in the role.*

With 12 regions across the basin casting such a significant reach of influence across the basin, on such finite resources, it is imperative that efforts to deliver across the regions and from the executive are consistent with our strategy, and are fully aligned, minimising gaps, and avoiding duplication.

This session will 'wrap up' the work done today, and chart the course for the year ahead.

	Strategic Plan 2017
	<p>Review the Strategic Plan to ensure continued relevance and alignment</p> <p>Proposed amendments are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• membership categorise to reflect changes in the constitution 2.2 and 2.3.1</li> <li>• Consider membership category for JO's ROC's and groups of Councils</li> <li>• Wording and grammar</li> </ul>
	Workplan 2017
	The Workplan 2017 needs to set out the actions required to achieve our strategic objectives for the year ahead
	Board KPIs
	<p>Board's KPIs need to be set to ensure alignment to and consistency with the Workplan. The Boards KPI's need to be SCRAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic</li> <li>• Consistent across the Regions</li> <li>• Realistic</li> <li>• Agreed</li> <li>• Measurable</li> <li>• Supported</li> </ul>
	CEO KPIs
	CEO's KPIs need to be set to align with the Strategic Plan; the Workplan; and to support the board members and their councils to achieve the Board KPI's
	National Conference 2017 - Theme
	<p>MDA's current principle advocacy push is for local government to be recognised as the third level of government in Australia, and the one most closely connected to our community. We are working to be included at ministerial level in the decision-making processes, ensuring local communities inform decisions before they are made.</p> <p>Theme should reflect this.</p>
	Murray Darling Foundation
	<p>Item 3.4 of board meeting 362 considered and resolved as follows.</p> <p>3.4 Application for re-registration of Charitable Status for the Foundation</p> <p>Notice has been received by the registrar of the ACNC that they may refuse our application for renewal based on their assessment that the Applicant is a government entity. This assessment is based on the information contained in our application, the requirements of the relevant legislation and the information available the assessment team, including the Constitution of the MDA. Section 5(d) of the Charities Act 2013 (Cth) (Charities Act) states that an entity that is a government entity is not a charity.</p> <p>Some discussion around the steps taken to date to re-establish the committee of the Foundation. It was noted that all attempts have been unsuccessful. Peter was keen to ensure that the path remained open to reapply if any when the Foundation is re-established.</p>

**Motion: That the MDA**

- a) withdraw its application for charitable status, reserving the right to re-submit when the Foundation resumes charitable activities, and**
- b) put out a further call for the re-establishment of a Foundation Committee.**

**P Maytom/D Clark**

**Carried**

- Advice has now been received confirming that the MDA is no longer a registered charity.
- Consider the nature and extent of endeavor of Part b) of the resolution
  - Strategic Alignment
  - Resourcing
  - Workplan 2017



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# 2017 WORKPLAN

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## Our Purpose

To provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal levels in the management of our Basin resources.

*MDA Strategic Plan 2016-19*

### Introduction

It is clear, from recent events, that local government has a key role to play in the future of the Murray Darling Basin regardless of the activities of other stakeholders. As the peak representative body for local government across the Basin, the MDA is responsible for ensuring that our actions always deliver value to our members by ensuring a strong alignment with our Purpose.

As such, our Purpose must provide the bedrock for our activities, and those activities are identified and agreed in the following workplan for the year ahead.

Our Strategic Plan provides the framework for this 2017 Workplan, which must ensure a 'clear line of sight' from the Strategic Plan to our operational activities.

Further, the actions and activates identified in this workplan must align with the CEO's (and indeed the Board's) performance indicators and will be used as a measure of their performance in the role.

To capitalise on our political strength, and thereby provide value to our members by delivering on our Purpose, the Board and Chief Executive Officer must build on the following key attributes to ensure they are clearly understood by all stakeholders. It is these attributes that give us the imprimatur to speak with authority about Basin matters:

**Goal: to be a valued source of accurate, concise, valid, timely information**

- We are knowledgeable about the Basin's history and current issues;
- We have a clear Vision for its future, and can describe what that would look like;
- We have strong communication links between our communities and key policymakers;

**Goal: to facilitate informed and constructive debate**

**Goal: to influence the policies of government**

- We have effective networks across all levels of governments and their agencies, who respect us and our activities;
- We look for solutions and can present our case robustly if needed.

**Goal: to be a strong, viable, self-sustaining organisation**

- We will maintain strong corporate governance
- We will build and maintain our membership

**Limiting factors**

Our reality is that we have a limited income base which, in turn, restricts what we can do, and how many we can employ to do it.

Regardless, we must ensure that Murray Darling Association is, and is seen to be a key Basin partner. To do this with limited resources means that we must be considered in our activities; do the right things and do them well.

The Workplan must identify the crucial elements to deliver our Purpose, and the actions around these that will provide the greatest value and effect. If we are restricted in what we can do, let's ensure that each activity adds to a firm foundation and structure for the following year's work.

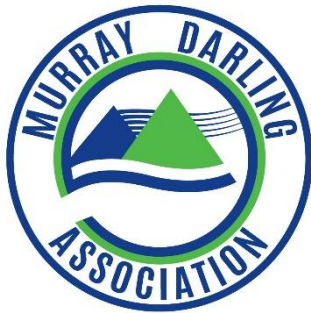
## Key Strategic Activities for 2017

Strategic Objective and supporting theme	Workplan Activities	Measures	Responsibility
<b>Strategic Goal: to be a valued source of accurate, concise, valid, timely information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop effective communication systems: at Board level; from communities to policymakers; and across the regions.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and adopt an efficient, low-cost system for Board and cross-region communication</li> <li>Provide regular updates to inform members of issues or that arise or exist in different parts of the Basin</li> <li>Develop an efficient content management strategy</li> </ol>	<p>Seamless video conferencing in place for Board meetings</p> <p>Quarterly region reports distributed after each meeting</p> <p>Regular content updates online</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>Region Chairs/CEO</p> <p>TBA</p>
<b>Goal: to facilitate informed and constructive debate</b> <b>Goal: to influence the policies of government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that effective regional council meetings are held regularly</li> <li>Identify the key politicians, department heads, agency heads and other people who influence Basin policy and create a robust working network</li> <li>Establish the new regional boundaries</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a suite of tools and templates which provide a good basis upon which regions can base their meetings.</li> <li>Conduct quarterly meetings across all regions.</li> <li>Undertake meetings and form good working relationships with the key people and agencies at state and federal levels who need to be in our network.</li> <li>Update the Regional Issues map</li> </ol>	<p>Regional Chair kit in place and being used by region secretariats</p> <p>Regions are compliant with the Constitution.</p> <p>Regions are developing regional identities and priorities.</p> <p>Regional Chairs establish effective regional, state-based, networks</p> <p>Networks are expanded and effective.</p> <p>Regions adopt Regional Strategy</p>	<p>CEO / Region Chairs</p> <p>Region Chairs/CEO</p> <p>Region Chairs/CEO</p> <p>National President/CEO</p> <p>Region Chairs</p>



Strategic Objective and supporting theme	Workplan Activities	Measures	Responsibility
	<b>5.</b> Each region has a standing item on its agenda for the Regional Issues map and the Regional Boundary review	Review and adopt updated Regional Boundaries by Feb 2018	Regional Chairs/CEO
<b>Goal: to be a strong, viable, self-sustaining organisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Board member has a clear understanding of the role of the Association and his/her role on the Board</li> <li>Our financial base is sufficient to do our work.</li> </ul>	<b>1.</b> Directors have easy access to and develop a sound understanding of: the Constitution; the Strategic Plan; the Workplan  <b>2.</b> Budget agendas support implementation of the Workplan  <b>3.</b> Agree the Terms of Reference and initial workplan for a specialist Finance Subcommittee  <b>4.</b> Meet the 2016/17 budget expectations  <b>5.</b> Successfully complete the 2016/17 financial audit  <b>6.</b> Prepare and approve the 2017/18 budget  <b>7.</b> The role, if any, for the Foundation is determined  <b>8.</b> Increase membership	Murray Darling Association holds a current induction on file for each Chair and council  An effective Board Agenda is in place  Resolution of the Board at Meeting 363 Adoption of the workplan at Meeting 364  Budget met  Audit certificate gained  A balanced budget is developed and adopted  Board discussion and decision	CEO/Board Members  National President/CEO  CEO/Board  CEO/Board  CEO  CEO/Board  Board

Strategic Objective and supporting theme	Workplan Activities	Measures	Responsibility
	<p>9. Develop capacity within Chairing councils</p>	<p>Membership income is sufficient to meet operating expenses</p> <p>Regional Chairs take an active role in developing their regional local government networks.</p> <p>Secretariat support is strong and consistent across the regions.</p> <p>Meeting agendas and minutes are developed and distributes in a timely and efficient manner.</p> <p>Officers provide reports and briefing papers on matters for consideration.</p>	<p>CEO/Board/Regional Chairs</p> <p>Region Chairs</p> <p>Region Chairs</p> <p>Region Chairs/Council</p> <p>Region Chairs/Council</p>



# Finance Subcommittee Terms of Reference

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## **Purpose**

The Finance Subcommittee provides advice to, and is a reference and support mechanism for, the Board in relation to the Association's financial performance and position. The finance subcommittee is not a policy-making body nor does it have substantive executive function. However, it assists the board in developing board policy and monitoring organisational activity within the scope of its remit, and making recommendations to the board for resolution.

## **Key Objectives**

The role of the committee includes assisting the board with the organisation's governance and exercising of due care, diligence, and skill in relation to the following key objectives:

- Ensure there is an income stream sufficient to deliver the Association's operational requirements and strategic objectives.
- Ensure the Board is accurately advised about the Association's financial performance and position.
- Ensure that an external audit of the financial statements is conducted annually, and the audited financial statements are included in the Annual Report.
- Ensure the Board is provided with a monthly cash flow forecast such as will assist directors to understand the future bank position regardless of budget expectations;

## **Specific areas of responsibility**

- Provide recommendations on the development of a resource plan, sufficient to meet the requirements of the Association's strategic objectives.
- Contribution to and review of the proposed annual budget, assessing alignment to strategic and resource plans and appropriateness of underlying assumptions before recommending it to the board;
- Review the audited annual financial statements before their presentation to the board, to ensure they represent a true and fair view of the organisation's financial position and performance and the organisation's cash flow;

- Meet at least once per year with the external auditors to review results and discuss the adequacy and effectiveness of accounting;
- Review the organisation's monthly financial reports in a timely manner, making recommendations to the board as required;
- Monitor the solvency of the organisation and raise any concerns to the board's immediate attention.
- Provide specific advice on financial matters as requested by the Board.

### **Powers of the Subcommittee**

- Board members of the Subcommittee act in an advisory capacity only. Responsibility for operational matters remains with the Chief Executive Officer.
- The Subcommittee acts under direction of the Board and makes recommendations to the Board within the context of its Terms of Reference.
- Unless there is a specific delegation of Board powers, the Finance Subcommittee has no delegated powers.

### **Mode of Operation**

- The audit committee will meet at least four times a year and hold extra meetings as required. A request for a meeting from the external auditors must be met.
- The Subcommittee may invite additional board members, staff or external specialists to attend meetings or provide advice as deemed appropriate by the Subcommittee.
- Minutes must be recorded for each Subcommittee meeting and held on file.
- The notice and agenda of a meeting will include relevant supporting papers and must be made available to committee members and invitees at least one week prior to the meeting date.

### **Members**

The board will appoint finance subcommittee members and the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee must be non-executive and independent, and must not be the chair of the board. The finance subcommittee will include

- Not more than four (4), not less than two (2) MDA Board members
- MDA Chief Executive Officer
- MDA Finance Officer
- One qualified external specialist

### **Quorum**

A quorum will be present with two (2) MDA Board members, the CEO, the Finance Manager, and the external specialist.

**Authority**

The committee has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the board, to approve financial expenditure or plans, or commit the organisation to activities or undertakings not otherwise approved by the Board.

**Responsible to**

The Board of Murray Darling Association Inc.

**Duration of Appointment**

The term of appointment of the committee members who are directors will coincide with their board tenure. The tenure of any other committee members will be determined at time of appointment.

**Voting**

Matters will generally be decided by consensus or, if a consensus can't be reached, by a majority of votes from the members present.

**Conflicts of interest**

Committee members will be invited to disclose conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting. Ongoing conflicts of interest need not be disclosed at each meeting once they have been acknowledged. Where members or invitees are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest they will be excused from committee discussions about the issue where a conflict exists.

**Secretariat duties**

The CEO of the MDA or another appropriate, designated person will act as secretary to the finance subcommittee. The secretary will help the chair to develop and distribute the agenda, papers, minutes, and calendar.

**Minutes**

Minutes must be prepared, approved by the chair and circulated to the members within two weeks of a subcommittee meeting. The minutes must be ratified and signed by the chair at the following meeting.

**Reporting to the board**

The chair of the finance subcommittee is to report to the board following each committee meeting. They may distribute a copy of the minutes supplemented with other necessary information, including recommendations requiring board action and/or approval. The chair is to organise a brief report on the information relating to the finance committee to be included in the organisation's annual report.

**Reviews**

The finance subcommittee will review its performance on an annual basis. The review may be conducted as a self-assessment and will be coordinated by the chair. The assessment may seek input from any person. Training needs will be monitored by the chair.





Murray Darling Association Inc.

# Strategic Plan 2016-19

It's in the balance







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**WELCOME!**

**One voice representing local government and communities across 14pc of the Australian continent on water-related issues – a powerful voice indeed.**

The Murray Darling Association Strategic Plan 2016-19 aims to provide a clear, cohesive and concise statement of the actions that will enable the MDA to fulfil our purpose and to represent our members on issues of local and basin wide significance.

This Plan is a collection of the transformative actions that will provide a platform for genuine local government and community participation in the decisions that impact our communities on Basin-related issues.

With the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, there has never been a more important time to ensure that local government and communities work together with all levels of government to ensure balanced outcomes in the management of our resources.

This Strategic Plan identifies our most important needs and prioritises the concentration of our efforts.

Working together, with local government at the core of our membership we can achieve cost efficiencies; generate best practice; stimulate informed debate; identify positive outcomes and most importantly recognise our shared future.

This Plan has been endorsed by members and representatives of the 12 regions across the Basin.

Implementation of the Plan will rely on the strength and commitment of our local government members, our Board and their member councils, and our small but committed team of staff.

In its 72 years, there has never before been a published Plan for the MDA that recognises the importance of the issues unique to the distinct regions of the Basin and articulates a shared vision.

This Plan has benefited from the collective experience of hundreds of members, the contribution of stakeholders from across the policy spectrum, and from supporters and from critics representing a wide range of interests.

On behalf of the Murray Darling Association, I would like to thank those of you who have helped us shape the Strategic Plan 2016-19.

We now look forward to working with you all in its implementation.



**Cr David Thurley**  
National President



**Emma Bradbury**  
Chief Executive Officer



# 1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## 1.1 OUR VISION

A healthy Murray Darling Basin supports thriving communities, economic development and sustainable productivity.

## 1.2 OUR PURPOSE

To provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing:

- information
- facilitating debate
- seeking to influence government policy.

## 1.3 OUR OBJECTIVES

To achieve our purpose, we will:

- advocate on behalf of Basin communities
- use local knowledge and expertise to fully understand regional issues
- act as a two-way conduit for information and discussion between our communities and governments
- encourage and facilitate debate about the things that matter for the Basin's future
- explore options to achieve sound solutions to regional issues
- test information to ensure a sound base for those options
- be an educational resource for the Basin.



## 1.4 WHO WE ARE

The Murray Darling Association is a membership-based peak representative organisation representing local government and communities across the Murray Darling Basin.

Established in 1944, the MDA has a strong history steeped in the traditions and achievements of local government.

This ensures that communities affected by the decisions of state and federal government have a clear and articulate voice at the table, informing the direction and realising the impact of those decisions.

## 1.5 WHERE WE ARE

Murray Darling Association represents 14pc of the Australian land continent.

It spans the length and breadth of the Murray Darling Basin, and includes all its communities and Basin resources.





## 1.6 WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE GOING

### STRENGTHS

- primacy of purpose
- our members – the collective expertise across our local government organisations and the experience and passion across our communities
- over 72 years history of continuous service
- lobbying capacity and capability.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- to harness the voice of 181 local government organisations across the basin
- to inform policy on Basin-related matters
- membership growth
- engage the next generation of farmers, advocates and community leaders
- better use of social media and information distribution technologies
- clearer definition of regional issues in pursuit of common goals.

### WEAKNESSES

- diluted regional engagement in some regions
- fragmentation of messaging or purpose
- membership services
- loss of corporate memory
- financial security/resourcing.

### THREATS

- disunity, and division
- poor quality or misinformation, diminishing credibility
- succession management.

## 2 MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

Since its foundation, many things have endured at the MDA, including the passion and commitment of our members and the priority of our purpose.

A less lofty legacy is the alarming regularity with which our organisation has reached crisis point for the want of clear direction and good governance.

The definitive history of the organisation *Up and Doing: A brief history of the Murray Valley Development League and the Murray Darling Association from 1944 to 2014* by Adrian Wells notes that the question of whether to disband or fight-on has been considered on numerous occasions, from as far back as 1952.

On each occasion, the board, our members and stakeholders across all levels of government have been resolute. The purpose is essential. We must prevail.

**The resilience of the MDA is equal to the community we represent.**

Challenges across the organisation have included persistent confusion over voting rights at consecutive AGMs; steady decline in memberships; increase in expectations; inconsistencies in the organisation's messaging; financial uncertainty; and deviations from regulatory compliance.

These challenges threatened the viability of the organisation, prompting the Board to commence a review in 2014 of the MDA's operations, and to ensure in 2016 that the MDA is an organisation that is fit for purpose and that can continue to serve its members through the development of the Strategic Plan.

**The result is a lean, focused and dynamic organisation, operating with the support of and for the benefit of local government and the communities of the Murray-Darling Basin.**







## 2.2 OUR MEMBERS

### **We have four categories of membership:**

- Local government members

181 municipalities are connected with and derive their wellbeing from the resources of the Murray-Darling Basin. Local government is directly connected with and representative of almost every aspect of a community and is tasked to ensure the wellbeing of its municipality.

Councils provide over 97pc of our core funding, and are the foundation and the future of our organisation.

Local government members pay a membership fee based on population size.

Supported by organisations staffed by skilled and experienced professionals, and informed and directed by elected representatives, local government is the primary MDA membership category.

- Organisation Members

Organisation Member may be a company, corporation, association, body corporate, partnership, government or statutory authority, community service or not for profit organisation or other legal body (other than a Member Council) accepted as a member.

- Individual Member

Individual member means a person accepted as a member.

- Life members

Recognised for their outstanding contribution to Basin communities, life members have, and continue to contribute a wealth of knowledge and experience to the MDA. There are currently 17 life members.

These membership categories ensure a diversity of skills, experience and perspectives are well represented, enabling the decisions of the MDA to be more broadly informed, and ensuring local government is able to participate at state and federal level, drawing on local knowledge and experience, supported by the skills and expertise required of the third level of government.

## 2.3 OUR CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE

Consistent with the review of the MDA's operations and compliance, the organisation also resolved to review the constitution.

The aim is not to change substantially the objectives/purposes of the organisation, however there are various uncertainties, interpretational issues and, in some cases, errors in the existing constitution.

Importantly, the constitution re-write should not drive discussions.

Rather, the re-write is intended to update the document to have it reflect the current objectives of the organisation and assist the MDA to operate with a clear and compliant governance structure.

The updated constitution will be put before the membership at the 2016 Annual General Meeting AGM in Dubbo.

### 2.3.1 VOTING RIGHTS

To align with the intention of the constitution as it is currently written, and to reflect the entitlements of the membership categories, the voting rights of members are:

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	VOTE AT THE AGM	VOTE AT REGION MEETINGS
Local government	1 vote, plus 1 vote per 20,000 head of population; capped at 3 votes	1 vote per region delegate in attendance. Up to 5 votes per member council
Life member	1 vote	1 vote
Organisation member	1 vote per person Up to 3 delegates per region	1 vote per paid-up member





### 2.3.2 VOTING PRINCIPLES

The following principles provide clarity on issues that have previously been unclear:

- members of all categories are eligible to hold the position of Regional Chair, entitling them to a seat on the Board of Management
- serving councillors are not eligible for associate membership. This ensures that neither our member councils, individual councillors, nor the MDA are compromised by the potential for conflicting interests
- a local government member representative is not eligible to stand as an associate member delegate at the AGM. This preserves the right and opportunity for individual members to vote at the AGM
- **organisation and individual** member delegates to the AGM are appointed by the membership in each region
- life member votes at the AGM or regional meetings cannot be proxied. Members must be in attendance to vote
- life memberships are capped, and the criteria and process for the awarding of life membership established
- the chair of any meeting has only one casting vote.



### 2.3.3 ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

The MDA has 12 regions across the basin covering 4 states and the ACT, with regions associated as communities of interest.

Each region is led by a chairman and a deputy chairman.

The chairman is elected annually by members of the region, and is responsible to provide, or appoint from within the region, adequate resources to ensure an effective secretariat.

In most instances, although not exclusively, the regional chair is held by a local government member.

The member council is represented in the chair by a delegated representative, duly appointed to the role by resolution of the member council.

#### Role of the regional chair:

- represents the interests of the membership at state and federal level, consistent with the resolutions of the region
- promotes growth and engagement within the region, to ensure robust discussion, informed debate, and clear resolutions to determine the advocacy priorities of the region
- conducts and chairs a minimum of four regional meetings per year
- attends bi-monthly meetings of the MDA Council of Regional Chairs
- occupies a position on the MDA board of management, and provides for the good governance of the association.
- attends bi-monthly meetings of the MDA board of management
- provides timely notification and communication between members and stakeholders through the executive
- liaises with the CEO to ensure effective management and maintenance of the region's membership database
- arranges preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes.

Each region's AGM is held at the last regional meeting of the calendar year.

Election of the national president, vice president and treasurer is held in February each year.

The regions are supported by a chief executive officer and small but dedicated team of staff, located in Echuca-Moama. The heart of region 2.





#### **2.3.4 MURRAY DARLING FOUNDATION**

The Murray Darling Foundation was formed in 1998 as a sub-committee of the association to enable philanthropists, individuals and businesses to donate funds in a tax-effective way towards the restoration of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Since its inception the foundation has undertaken a number of projects, many of which have had a significant influence on basin life.

2014 saw the dissolution of the committee, a significant cessation of contributions, and a sense that the purpose of the Foundation has been diminished.

The restoration of the Murray-Darling Basin is now well served by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, and other state-based authorities.

The Foundation remains a registered entity and there may be opportunities for the Foundation to resume active operation in the future.

Any activities undertaken by the Foundation are required to be self-managed, self-funding, and comply with the regulatory requirements under which it operates.





## 2.4 ROLES

### National President

The National President has a role in chairing the board of management and a further role in effectively representing the adopted position of the MDA on matters of Basin-wide significance.

### Regional Chair

The role of the regional chair is to facilitate regular meetings, indentifying the interests and informing the advocacy priorities of their region.

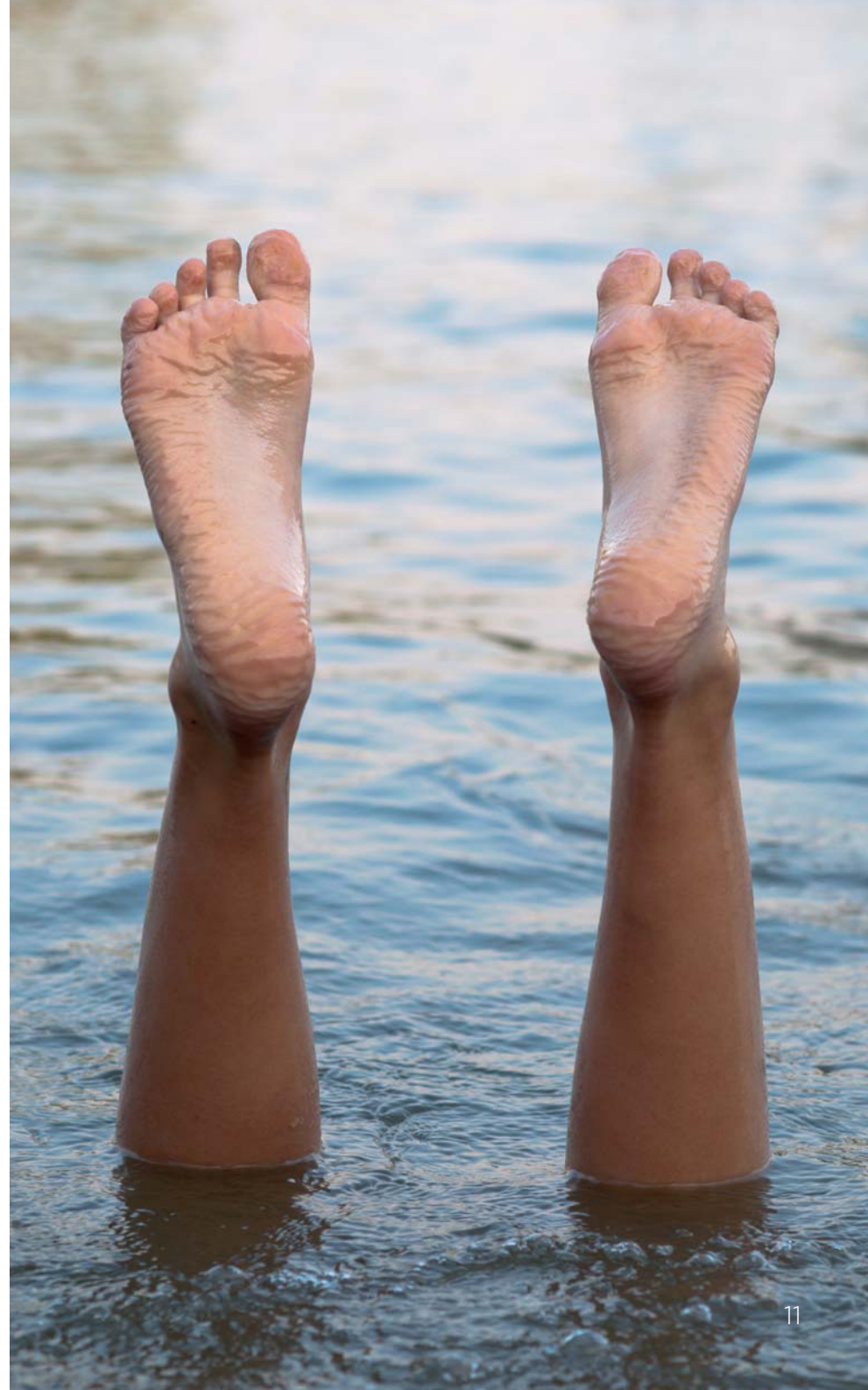
The combined council of regional chairs also forms the board of management of the Murray Darling Association.

It is the role of the board of management to set the strategy for the organisation.

### Chief Executive Officer

The role of the chief executive officer is to work with the board of management, the council of regional chairs, and the staff of the organisation to deliver the strategy.

Specific performance indicators, as set by the board of management annually will assist in prioritising the CEO's direction in the role.



## 2.5 THE BASIN PLAN 2012

Any strategic plan for the Murray Darling Association must clearly recognise the fundamental significance of the Basin Plan 2012 to our current role and purpose.

A core objective of the Basin Plan is to ensure that the social, environmental and economic impacts of the implementation of the Plan is balanced and positive.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority, tasked with the implementation of the basin plan shares with the MDA a commonality of work undertaken, and a mutual appreciation of the challenges faced.

Both authorities recognise the importance of mutual cooperation, consultation and knowledge sharing.

It is important that the Murray Darling Association articulates a clear and united position in relation to the often contentious Plan.

From this the MDA can provide advocacy and direction for policy changes and management practices, and avoid confusion and damage that can be caused by individual

advocates who may purport to represent the Murray Darling Association.

The MDA supports the purpose of and the need for the Basin Plan 2012, and acknowledges that it is an adopted strategy agreed by all states and the commonwealth.

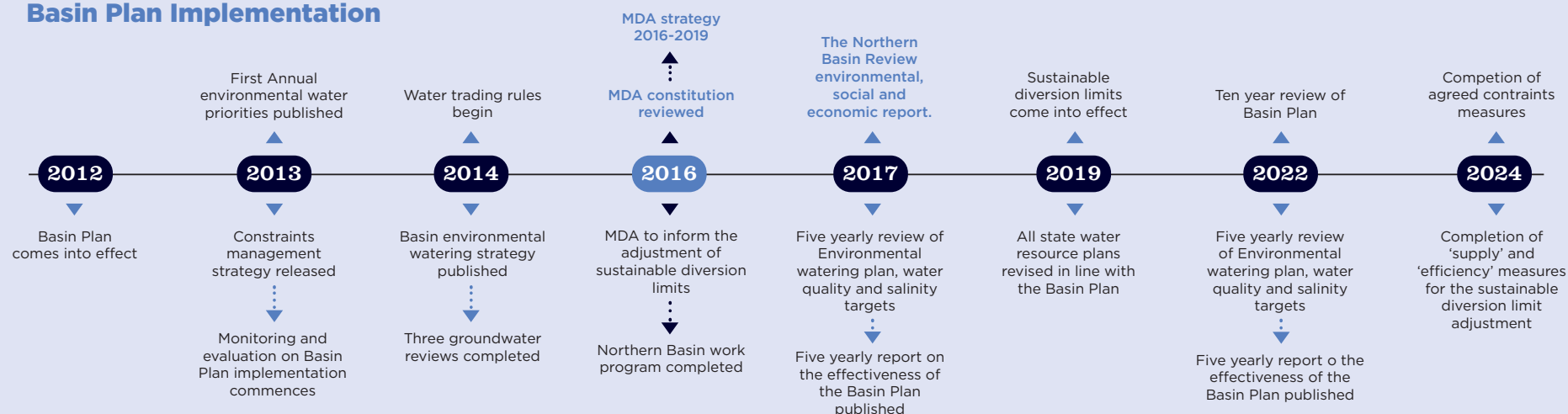
The MDA acknowledges that elements of the basin plan will always benefit from the application of adaptive management principles and practices.

We commit to work constructively with the MDBA, and other stakeholders using our collective engagement and influence for the overall benefit of the Murray Darling Basin and the communities reliant upon its resources, via the implementation of the basin plan.

The MDA will continue to advocate for the development of a rigorous and repeatable basin plan evaluation framework and methodology against which the social and economic impacts of the plan can be measured and assessed.

Any such assessment tool must be able to identify and distinguish short term, unrelated, and one-off impacts from the underlying performance of the Plan.

### Basin Plan Implementation



## 2.6 REGIONAL ISSUES

As an Association we **share** the vision of a healthy Murray Darling Basin that supports thriving communities, economic development and sustainable productivity, and **work together in our common purpose** to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating debate, and seeking to influence government policy common.

We also recognise that our regions represent the interests, issues and circumstances of a wide array of communities across a vast tract of the Australian continent.

By working together to better understand the unique issues define, challenge and shape our regions, we are better able to inform policy and achieve shared solutions.

The development of our Issues Map, some of the key issues of which are noted below, will inform the strategic direction and define the work of our regions.

The issues outlined below are not intended to be final. They are a snap-shot from which the regions will each develop a more comprehensive and authoritative Regional Strategy.

For more information contact your Regional Chair.

### REGION 1

Chair  
Albury City  
Council  
Cr David  
Thurley

- Balance between the use of water for power generation and the operation of Snowy Hydro and water for irrigation and the environment
- Groundwater mining
- Potential impacts of the constraints management strategy

### REGION 2

Chair  
Deniliquin  
Council  
Mr Des Bilske

- Impact of the loss of 27% of productive water from the region following the millennium drought. The swiss cheese effect of non-productive farms being interspersed between highly productive irrigated properties with the remaining responsible for higher distribution costs of water.
- The buyback of water increasing the market value of water for both permanent and temporary trade making some crops in low water allocation periods non-viable.
- Constraints management for delivery of environmental water through the systems with the possibility of flooding of productive lands.
- Conversion of productive red gum forests to national parks and resulting loss of employment and royalties to the region.
- Environmental sustainability of the river systems and river valleys.

### REGION 3

Chair (interim)  
Deniliquin  
Council  
Mr Des Bilske

- Need for structural adjustment packages for directly affected economically impacted communities
- Efficiency of environmental infrastructure investments
- Regional leadership and local engagement

### REGION 4

Mildura Rural  
City Council  
(interim)

- Quality and quantity of water available through the Menindee Lakes and reliant communities
- Regional leadership and local engagement

**REGION 5**  
Mid-Murray Council  
Cr Kevin Myers

- River health
- Balancing the needs and interests of tourism and horticulture
- Managing the uncertainty and diminished confidence that results from poor communication and understanding of the impacts of the Basin Plan.

**REGION 6**  
Alexandrina Council  
Cr Barry Featherston

- Lack of available information on the evaluation and monitoring of the Murray Darling Basin Plan
- Quality and quantity of water reaching the Murray Mouth
- Investigation of the connector between the Lower Lakes and the Coorong
- Understanding the trigger points and conditions for the effective use of the desalination plant.

**REGION 7**  
City of Port Adelaide Enfield  
Cr Peter Jamieson

- Availability and quality of water available to the metro area – based on conditions impacting the balance of shandy of Mt Lofty catchment resource with water from the river system.
- Economic confidence within the metro area driven by rural and regional conditions.
- Opportunity for contribution of urban and metro development of water saving and management technologies that can benefit rural basin communities.
- Understanding the trigger points and conditions for the effective use of the desalination plant.

**REGION 8**  
Vacant

- Reliance on the availability of Murray water whilst being external to the catchment.
- Understanding the trigger points and conditions for the effective use of the desalination plant.

**REGION 9**  
Leeton Council  
Cr Paul Maytom

- Lack of understanding of the progress of the Murray Darling Plan Basin
- Information on the social and economic
- Absence of effective monitoring and evaluation of the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan creating uncertainty and division
- Efficiency and effectiveness of on-river water storages and delivery

**REGION 10**  
Dubbo City Council  
Murray Wood

- No targeted structural adjustment packages for directly affected economically impacted communities
- Absence of feedback from relevant authorities regarding outcomes of social, economic and environments benefits, or other impacts
- Resolution of competing priorities between floodplain graziers and irrigated agriculture and mining.

**REGION 11**  
Vacant

- Northern Basin Review
- Social and economic impacts assessment
- Regional leadership and local engagement

**REGION 12**  
Vacant

- Northern Basin Review
- Regional leadership and local engagement
- Regional leadership and local engagement









## GOAL: TO BE A VALUED SOURCE OF ACCURATE, CONCISE, VALID, TIMELY INFORMATION

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1:

Utilise local knowledge and expertise

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Ensure material considered at the regions is a position of the member council/s represented
- ▶ Value and encourage the contribution of associate members
- ▶ To understand and be informed by indigenous experience, expertise and perspectives

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Reference by delegates to the resolutions and policies of the councils they represent
- ▶ Increased satisfaction levels and support by individual members
- ▶ Every region has an MOU with, or membership of local indigenous community representative organisation

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2:

To be a two way conduit of information between our membership and responsible authorities

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Test information through a robust and vigorous process of fact checking and application of scientific, and empirical evidence
- ▶ Validate information by utilising valid and valued educational resources
- ▶ To explore viable options for solutions to basin related challenges

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Member councils both provide and rely on information shared between council and the MDA
- ▶ The minutes of region meetings are tabled at council by all council delegates
- ▶ Information is tested and assessed by members and stakeholders
- ▶ Responsible authorities engage more actively and responsively with the MDA

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3:

To build memberships

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Value local government as the representative of the community
- ▶ Value the diversity of experience, expertise and perspective contributed by associate members
- ▶ Demonstrate value to both local government and associate members through a clearly articulated, fair and constructive membership rights
- ▶ Reform the anomalies contained within the voting rights to ensure effective representation of and value for members and responsibilities, including voting rights

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Target 80pc membership of all municipalities in each region
- ▶ Target 1:1 ratio or better of local government and associate memberships across all regions
- ▶ Adopt a compliant and workable draft of the MDA Constitution by 2016



## GOAL: TO FACILITATE INFORMED AND CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1:

To develop the strength and authority of the regions

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Properly resource our secretariats through data sharing and support
- ▶ Conduct at least 4 region meetings per year
- ▶ Ensure that regional meeting minutes, discussions, and resolutions are detailed, accurate and constructive
- ▶ Support strong leadership within the regions
- ▶ Apply eligibility criteria to regional leadership roles to strengthen regional leadership
- ▶ Maintain current and accurate data to support member engagement
- ▶ Develop consistent processes and procedures, data and resources to support the regional secretariats
- ▶ Encourage councils to appoint appropriately skilled, experienced and qualified delegates
- ▶ Grow membership numbers and participation
- ▶ To re-establish the MDA's presence in the Northern Basin
- ▶ Develop a Communication and Marketing Plan that sets out our pathway to being an effective and efficient conduit of information

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Current and accurate database
- ▶ Compliance across all regions
- ▶ Member councils both provide and rely on information shared between council and the MDA
- ▶ Minutes contribute to and support the advocacy issues and priorities
- ▶ Elections are robustly contested among member councils
- ▶ Member councils actively consider the value of their contribution to regional leadership on Basin related issues
- ▶ Nominations are strongly supported by delegates' member councils
- ▶ Member councils provide resources to support the Chair
- ▶ All members are engaged, connected and fully informed
- ▶ A balanced mix of local government representative (councillor) and professional (officer) delegates
- ▶ Membership income reaches \$300,000
- ▶ Every region achieves 100% financial participation of the municipalities in their region
- ▶ Resolutions of the regions reflect and are supported by the position and or policies of member councils
- ▶ Appoint an interim Chairing council for regions 11 and 12
- ▶ Well lead, compliant region within 12 months of the appointment of an interim Chair
- ▶ Consistent and timely delivery of approved messaging, communication and information sharing

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2:

To create a shared understanding of competing priorities across the regions

### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Conduct Bi-Monthly meeting of the Regional Chairs - 'Council of Regional Chairs'
- ▶ Development of a regional issues map

### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Executive records
- ▶ Adoption of the Issues Map

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3:

Communicate effectively inter-regionally

### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Conduct bi-monthly meetings of the region Chairs
- ▶ Effective use of social media
- ▶ Distinguish the role of the regional chair, and the responsibilities as board members
- ▶ Develop an Issues Map for the Basin regions that describes the range of needs and concerns across the different municipalities and provides a foundation for informed discussion and shared understanding
- ▶ Investment in technology to ensure high-quality distance-conferencing across and outside the Basin

### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Adoption of bi-monthly Board, and Council of Regional Chairs meetings
- ▶ Implementation of seamless video conferencing for whole of Board/Council of Regional Chairs meeting





## GOAL: TO INFLUENCE THE POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1:

To effectively advocate on behalf of our members

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Empower and support regions to be more active in their advocacy
- ▶ Maintain detailed and accurate minutes of region meetings
- ▶ Rely on the adopted position, reports and professional expertise of member councils in forming advocacy positions and priorities
- ▶ Demonstrate clear accountability and veracity of advocacy positions and priorities

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Region Chairs meet regularly with state and federal members of parliament
- ▶ Publication of the Minutes of Region meetings
- ▶ Minutes are supported by the reports and policies of member councils
- ▶ Publication of the minutes of the Council of Regional Chairs

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2:

To inform the review of social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan due to be completed by the MDBA 2017

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Advocate for suitably qualified technical expert to partner with the MDBA and the MDA to develop a rigorous and repeatable Basin Plan evaluation framework and methodology that can distinguish the one-off and short term impacts from the underlying performance and structural impacts of the Plan

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3:

To provide policy direction to inform the implementation of the SDL Adjustment Mechanism

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #4:

To participate in the finalisation of the Northern Basin Review

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #5:

To work with consultants and researchers to investigate the possibilities of improving Plan outcomes

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Partner with universities and other sources of research and technical expertise
- ▶ Deliver a successful Annual National Conference

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ The application of new thinking from experiences gained informs new policy in Basin management practices
- ▶ Conference delivers a clear set of advocacy priorities for the year ahead, informed by the regions and resolved by the members through an accountable and clear voting framework



## GOAL: BE A STRONG, VIABLE, SELF-SUSTAINING ORGANISATION

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1:

To apply always the principals of good governance

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ To ensure regulatory compliance
- ▶ Focus on our core purpose and areas of expertise

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Regular, compliant process and financial audits
- ▶ Distribute the required changes in a new draft Constitution for consultation with the regions in readiness for the next AGM
- ▶ Every action by the MDA aligns to the purpose of the organisation

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2:

To attract and retain diversity of thought, opinion, experience and representation

#### PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS:

- ▶ Manage for effective succession
- ▶ Identify and address any barriers to the equal participation of women

To understand and be informed by indigenous experience, expertise and perspectives

#### INDICATIONS:

- ▶ Every region has a strong executive with identified successors developing the skills and experience required to lead the region
- ▶ Board adopts a plan for succession of the Chief Executive Officer
- ▶ Equal gender representation across the staff, board and regions
- ▶ Every region has an MOU with, or membership of local indigenous community representative organisation

## 4 OUR FINANCIAL BASE

Current annual membership income stands at approximately \$200,000, enabling the MDA to deliver lean but effective representation and to ensure regulatory compliance.

It is imperative that memberships grow, in order to deliver better informed and empowered representation across the regions.

With growth in memberships comes an increase in revenue, allowing for further investment in delivering on the purpose of the organisation.

The current target is to grow annual membership income to \$220,000 by 2017, \$250,000 by 2018 and \$290,000 by 2019.

The role of Regional Chair provides further resources through secretariat support.

This support leverages membership income and is consistent with the MDA's current strategy to provide lean, focused representative advocacy.







## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP COST



---

\$0.27 plus GST per head of population  
capped at \$6,000.00 plus GST

---

ie: 100,000 popl (last ABS Census)

---

~~\$27,0000.00~~

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Total cost \$6,600.00

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\* Membership fees may be reviewed from time to time

## 5 CONCLUSION

In order to succeed in what is an imperative purpose, we must constantly respond to the needs of our members. We must deliver value, and ensure our strategy is clear, focused and fit to carry us forward into a challenging and dynamic future.

To be effective, our strategy has to be well communicated. It has to be a shared vision. And it must be understood.

**But most of all, this strategy has to inspire.**

Recognising this, the Board of Management representing its respective communities and regions; the executive team, and a skilled and experienced facilitator met in Echuca Victoria, February 2016.

**Strategy and governance is a team activity.**

The Echuca meeting generated creative discussions that encouraged innovation and challenged the status quo.

From those discussions, including invited presentations and submissions from stakeholders, the current plan of action emerged.







Murray Darling Association Inc. Strategic Plan 2016-2019

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