



Murray Darling Association Inc.

Region 11

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Region 11 Ordinary Meeting
11:00am, Friday 25 November 2022
Gunnedah Shire Council, Council Chambers, held in person and via zoom

MINUTES – Friday 25 November 2022

Acknowledgement to Country

I would like to acknowledge all first nations people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we gather today. I would also like to pay respect to elders both past, present and emerging and extend that respect to any Aboriginal Australians present today.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Cr Jamie Chaffey	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr Robert Hoddle	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr Russell Webb	Tamworth Regional Council
Cr Greg Sauer	Tenterfield Shire Council (via Zoom)
Mr Mark Lamb	Chief Executive Officer, Murray Darling Association (via Zoom)
Mr Tim Phillips	MDA, Communications & Engagement Officer (via Zoom)
Cr Doug Hawkins	Liverpool Plains Shire Council (via Zoom)
Annabelle Guest*	Regional Engagement Officer, MDBA (via Zoom)
Jane Humphries*	Local Engagement officer, Northern Basin (Moree) (via Zoom)

* Non-member – attendance by invitation

Apologies

Cr Lyndon Mulligan	Gwydir Shire Council
Mr Andrew Johns	Director Planning & Environmental Services, Gunnedah Shire Council

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jamie Chaffey advised that he has a “less than significant and non pecuniary interest” due to being a primary producer and he has a small stock and domestic water licence.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

That the minutes of the General Meeting of Murray Darling Association Inc Region 11 held on Friday 12 August 2022, as typed and circulated, be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

ACTION: That the minutes of the General Meeting held on Friday 12 August 2022, be accepted
Moved Cr G Sauer /Seconded Cr R Hoddle Carried

BROC Secretariat is Inverell Shire Council

UPDATE FROM MURRAY DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY (MS ANNABELLE GUEST)

Ms Annabelle Guest, Murray Darling Basin Authority gave a brief update

- MDBA have been very busy, the basin is currently sitting at almost 100% north and south
- There has been a lot of flooding down in the basin system from the Murray system
- Acknowledge the tough time for those on the Namoi River, it has been a tough 12 months, hearing that flooding is better than the drought
- 10 year of basin plan, looking back at achievements - Initial plan for review is in 2024
- New Chief Executive is Mr Andrew McConville
- The Basin plan is a critical part of the water reform
- Dedicated water recovery taskforce, conversation with stakeholders along the Namoi Water, conversation around the target that will be received
- Minister Plibersek advised that there are options on the table, buybacks on the table, no dedicated program currently in place, but the Minister has advised that they will be back on the table.
- MDBA Conference for 2023 will be located in the northern basin (Narrabri), Griffiths held a conference first and then Mildura, now will be held in 2023 in Narrabri 14 – 15 June 2023.
- Steering Committee has been formed from various groups that will assist with the content and field groups for the conference.
- Apologies that couldn't get to Gunnedah Shire Council meeting last week due to the flooding.
- Inspector -General of Water Compliance, Mr Troy Grant will be coming to the Namoi area in early December 2022.
- MDBA have a dedicated office in Goondiwindi, they find it difficult to find staff to fill the office space in Goondiwindi, but there is offsite dedicated staff.
- Councillor Chaffey advised that there is a legal process for buybacks, because there are options there are some processes happening, but nothing in place at the moment.

UPDATE FROM MS JANE HUMPHRIES - Local Engagement officer, Northern Basin (Moree) – Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment & Water Local engagement officer for commonwealth

Ms Humphries provided a verbal presentation for those members present:

- We are managing adaptably, a lot of phone call, online and getting out and about as we can
- Water Birds – Breeding numbers increasing across the basin.
- Planning for this coming season – had a meeting with Namoi and Peel stakeholders
- Other engagement, school groups, local community groups, focussing on Aboriginal groups and work with other key organisations like Councils, irrigator groups anyone interested in Environmental Water

General Notes

There has been significant rain events in the Gunnedah Shire over the past 12 months, with 9 floods. There has been erosion, with significant damage, on the banks of the Namoi and Mooki Rivers. We need to plan of a lot of assessments for the network once our cycle gets back to normal. Councillor Chaffey asked if there has been any conversation at MDBA level on how to do that assessment of these banks on the rivers.

Ms Humphries has been talking to the northwest section about this – Sarah Chapman in Moree. Contact has been made to them about the Riverbank erosion and there will be small amounts of funding put in place to assist with this. Funding options for the earthworks, soil conservation fully booked already, it will take time

Ms Humphries will provide more information around this eg stabilising, fencing etc. The issue is across all catchments, Namoi River has been more impacted by the quick flood events.

Councillor Chaffey asked who will provide the funding or additional funding for this and how can we advocate to strengthen the support for more funding.

Ms Humphries advised that North West Local Land Services receive funding from the Federal Government and NSW State Government sources (Natural Resources team), they are trying to obtain an estimate of funding required for the areas. Flood recovery funding – not sure how much is for erosion and restoration.

Councillor Russell Webb asked, Natural Resource Funding from Local Land Services, the funding has been low for a number of years now, so not sure where they will receive the money from and that would be a Federal Government decision to provide them more funding. There certainly will be some claims to be made.

Murray Cod – there is a lot of organisations that do restocking into local dams, local business that breed fish and can restock the dams. There is a downturn of fish numbers currently in Keepit Dam.

Ms Jane Humphries left the meeting, the time being 11.37am

CEO REPORTS SINCE LAST REGION 11 MEETING (MR MARK LAMB)

Mr Mark Lamb, CEO of Murray Darling Association, provided an update:

- Intends on visiting the areas of Region 11 and it is great to see Councillor Webb from Tamworth Regional Council at today's meeting.
- Highlighted a few keys issues from his MDA CEO Report and spoke about the recent MDA Conference that was held recently in Albury.
- Conference – there were 15 new motions put up to the conference, with 100 letters now gone out since the conference, all these motions are available on website
- Councillor Jamie Chaffey's Region 11 chairperson conference report was provided and Mr Lamb thanked Councillor Chaffey for the excellent summary of the conference
- Advocacy - really great to see a number of members attending the conference and the support from the Water Minister to State Politicians, Academics, Partners, Sponsors etc
- Further communication from Minister Plibersek, hoping to receive an invite to MINCO, however they chose not to invite us on this occasion, however there has been communication before and since MINCO
- Advocating with all state water ministers
- Overall very pleased with the conference and a great response, previous years have lost money, but this year made a slight contribution. Will continue to work with various partners.
- SQNSW is about the drought resilience Hub, working with them – driven by the UNE and Southern Uni QLD
- Key initiatives is working with CSIRO, they engaged us to work on the Circular Economy
- Funding provided to engage and provide work on the Circular Economy
- MDA is about supporting communities and local government
- Starting to plan for the MDA Conference in South Australia for 2023
- Membership – after the conference focussing on the northern basin, hoping to meet in person in the near future, engage in a membership drive. Tamworth Regional Council recently made the decision to join the MDA.
- Mark is hoping to visit Region 12 in the coming months
- Councillor Greg Sauer – 2024 conference timing is crucial, the Local Government elections is 24 September 2024, Councils will be reluctant to send anyone to a conference close to the election date, so

the conference will need to be a month before, need to plan well ahead and identify the best time in August 2024.

- Councillor Russell Webb confirmed that TRC have now joined the MDA, encouraged by Councillor Chaffey, noting that membership is more affordable now than in previous years

Ms Annabelle Guest left the meeting, the time being 11.51am

Mr Mark Lamb, CEO will advise Councillor Jamie Chaffey well in advance before he heads to Gunnedah, so that Councillor Chaffey can book this out in his diary and travel with Mr Lamb to visit members within Region 11. Councillor Chaffey also suggested that Mr Lamb could address the Council and make it a more beneficial tour of the area.

Delegates Report after MDA Conference

The Conference was very well run and a well informed conference, MDA does hold informative conferences, It's great to get together across the whole basin to hear the conversations and hear the other side.

2022 MDA Motions Progress

Motion 6.8 – Progress Reporting on the 450GL Recovery Program

This is in the early days, with over 100 letters issued and still a few motions that we are working on Reengaging with them further to obtain what the motion objectives are
Looking at meeting with specific delegates

We are nervous about the buybacks and meeting the 450GL commitment, there is a plan, however it isn't being shared at the moment. We are hoping that Mr Lamb, CEO MDA will be able to find out more information. If we lose 9.4 gig in the Namoi this could be catastrophic

Ongoing motions progress is updated via the MDA website

<https://bit.ly/3tW1ijR>

It was great to see the feedback after the motions were made at the conference and this should continue to be provided on a bimonthly basis. Thank you to Mark and his team for doing a fantastic job

2024 MDA Conference – Region 11 bid to host

Tamworth Regional Council and Gunnedah Shire Council are looking to combine to host the 2024 Conference

Unfortunately we didn't have time to submit application for the 2023 MDA Conference bid

If endorsed by Region 11, then we need to get together and commence the process of organising the conference

The 2024 Conference bid applications will open from any time now and will close just prior to the 2023 Conference being held, so that the winner can be announced at the 2023 Conference. Mr Lamb will mention this at the next Board meeting on 05/12/22

Suggest submitting an application in the early part of 2023 to ensure that it is received

There may be an impact on number of attendees may be because of the LG election in September 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That MDA Region 11 put forward a bid to host the 2024 MDA Conference
2. Expressions of Interest be sent to all financial members of MDA Region 11 to seek if there are any members who would like to host the 2024 MDA Conference

Moved Clr Greg Sauer, Seconded Clr Russell Webb

The EOI might help to increase MDA membership, members of Region 11 may wish to then join and become a financial member of MDA so as to be able to bid to host the MDA Conference in 2024.

Councillor Russell Webb commented that this is what we should aim for, this is a positive for Tamworth Regional Council joining MDA, as this will assist in drawing a conference to our areas and for others to look at what challenges we have in our areas.

EOI to be submitted in February or March 2023 to MDA – (mark advised will look at possibly August 2023 they be due)

Tamworth / Gunnedah would be excellent to host this event, these two towns being between Lake Keepit Dam and Tamworth has a great Airport, however we need to ensure that we don't hold the conference close to Ag-Quip week as well, Tamworth, Narrabri, Quirindi are also affected with no accommodation during this time.

The members present suggested July 2024 as the month for the Conference.

1/3 of those members of Murray Darling Association are eligible to be a member of Region 11

EOI is only to be distributed and received from the financial members of MDA Region 11, however suggested that the other towns wish to become a member of Region 11 be advised of the EOI and see if they wish to join the MDA

Gunnedah Shire Council received an email from MDA with a guide on how to submit a tender for the National Conference, plus copies of previous submissions as reference, noting that these documents are Confidential.

Consideration of Northern Basin Forum

Consider a mini version of to bring the members back together, with major speakers, this will assist with membership and water user groups, state agencies and local government agencies. Key issues around water. It is timely to do this now given the water buyback is on the table. Look at hosting early in the new year.

Mr Mark Lamb - Northern basin – Regions 10, 11, 12 – there is 10A and 10B – focus on 10A, 11 and 12, but can invite other regions to attend the forum.

MDA are happy to assist with supporting the forum, however Regions to run it, but MDA to support as much as possible

Councillor Russell Webb suggested a draft forum agenda be sent out to the members requesting feedback, will also need to apply costing into the draft eg: accommodation, dinner on the night etc. Councillor Webb and Councillor Chaffey to meet to discuss and draft an agenda to be distributed.

Councillor Greg Sauer, we need to lock in a date, draft agenda and obtain some sponsorship, then send out to the regions, need to be proactive. Suggested end May 2023 for the Forum, Send a briefing paper to Region 10 and 12.

All MDA Region 11 members please submit an email back to Region 11 Secretary on what they would like to see held at the forum.

An email to be sent to all the MDA Region Chairs to advise that Region 11 will be looking at holding and hosting a Forum and that going forward will look a forum event being held annually or biannually.

Mr Lamb will raise this at the 5 December Board meeting, so that the Board are aware. Mr Lamb advised that the Regions don't need to go to the Board for approval, more just to keep the Board informed.

Councillor Russell Webb suggested that Tamworth Regional Council host this Forum for end May 2023 and Councillor Webb will make contact with accommodation providers in Tamworth to inform them.

Councillor Doug Hawkins advised that he fully supports Tamworth Regional Council to host the Forum in May 2023. Mr Mark Lamb agreed that he is happy to MC the Forum in May 2023.

Membership of Region 11

Mr Mark Lamb to provide a Region 11 Membership list a week in advance of the tour, so that Councillor Chaffey can approach each Council Mayor.

MDA REGION 11 FUTURE MEETING DATES

There was a general discussion held in relation to Region 11 future meeting dates:

- BROC meeting is next week, Clr Kate Dight (Inverell) is standing for the chairs role next week
- BROC AGM - they will set their future meeting dates
- Region 11 meetings usually aligned with the BROC meetings
- Proposed BROC meetings to be held in 2023 in the months of February, May, August and November, but not confirmed till after the BROC AGM on Monday 5 December 2022, will look at our standard meeting dates for Region 11 will align with them.

NOTE: BROC DATES WERE CONFIRMED AFTER THIS MDA REGION 11 MEETING WAS HELD, ADDING THE MEETING DATES TO THE MINUTES AS A REFERENCE FOR MDA REGION 11 MEMBERS:

- **BROC meeting dates for 2023 are as follows** 23 February @ Walgett, 25 May @ St George (Balonne), 24 August @ Cunnamulla (Paroo) and 23 November @ Tenterfield and;
BROC meeting dates for 2024 are as follows 22 February @ Brewarrina, 23 May @ Warwick (Southern Downs), 22 August @ Inverell and 28 November @ Goondiwindi.
- **Northern Basin Forum** – we will need to have an **Extraordinary meeting** in December 2022 once consensus from Region 10 and Region 11 about the forum, so we can lock in dates, accommodation. The Extraordinary meeting will be held virtual and face to face.

Thank you to all members for their commitment to Region 11 MDA

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next MDA Region 11 meeting is to be advised and will be held in person and via Zoom.

CLOSE

The meeting closed, the time being 12:45pm