



Murray Darling Association Inc.

Region 11

Chairperson:
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**Region 11 Ordinary Meeting
1:00pm, Friday 19 May 2023
Gunnedah Shire Council, Council Chambers, held in person and via Zoom**

MINUTES – Friday 19 May 2023

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 Russell Webb	Tamworth Regional Council
Mr Bruce Logan	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)
Mr Andrew Johns	Director Planning & Environmental Services, Gunnedah Shire Council

* Non-member – attendance by invitation

Apologies

Cr Lyndon Mulligan	Gwydir Shire Council
Ms Annabelle Guest	Regional Engagement Officer Namoi/Gwydir
Cr Robert Hoddle	Gunnedah Shire Council
Ms Jane Humphries	Local Engagement officer, Northern Basin (Moree)
Cr Doug Hawkins	Liverpool Plains 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 25 November 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 25 November 2022, be accepted
Moved Russell Webb / Seconded Greg Sauer

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

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

- Membership is an on-going challenge, delighted to welcome back Tamworth last year into Region 11
- Mark spoke at Toowoomba Council a few months ago and had a similar response of positive feedback about Murray Darling Association. He tried to explore what made them drop out and some responses were they see a very different attitude at the MDA.
- Mark met with Tee Tree Gully Council part of Region 7 which he got an overwhelming response, they are looking to re-join straight away.
- Mark is meeting with other Council's across the Basin to encourage them to join/re-join.
- Advocacy is a key aspect, since the last AGM in Albury, September 2022. They have 13 current motions and have seen some tangible actions as a result of some of those motions. These are now on a website
- There is a new website running and applauds Tim Phillips on his work put in to get this running. The website is no longer outsourced; this allows an e-commerce facility built in to the website so outsourcing conference ticketing is no longer required. Tests went well so they are now live with the ticketing for the annual conference.
- Partnership developed with CSIRO continues to go from strength to strength; they have been engaged by CSIRO to do another project on the circular economy.
- The partnership with One Basin CRC which has 4 particular nodes/hubs ranging from Goondiwindi to Loxton in SA will produce some great outcomes we can utilise.
- Funding from Government entities is starting to flow, including private investors which make a contribution.
- The Conference is ahead of the game; in comparison to last year ticketing has gone live already on the website. The Murray Darling Association website shows what's going on by the banner headlines and if you look further you can see some of the content they are proposing.
- Mark mentioned this year they are trying to obtain a balance of the politicians, bureaucrats, academics, industry, water users or the communities and the impacts it has on them.
- Some speakers have already been secured and are in contact with the politicians to ensure they are available, some may not be available due to sitting weeks of Parliament.
- Monday 25th September there will be a welcome reception held at the Murray Bridge Rowing club which is right on the bank of the Murray.
- Tuesday 26th September will be the Study Tour from Murray Bridge and take them along the Coorong and across the barrages. This will give them some understanding of the lower Murray.
- Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th will be the conference proper. MDA is expecting a large turn out for these particular days. Wednesday evening there will be a Gala dinner at the Bridge Port Hotel.
- The conference proper will be based at the Town Hall. Mark's advice is to secure accommodation sooner rather than later to receive the better rates.
- Tim and Mark attended the Region Two meeting on 18/05/23 held on the NSW side of the Murray Darling. A discussion of merging some regions was brought up, specifically realigning borders. Mark will take this to the board for their consideration on 5 June 2023. There is work to be done in Western NSW and Southern basin, possibly Northern as well.
- General discussion was held around Murray Bridge

MDA Basin Plan – next phase

- Cr Jamie Chaffey asked Mark Lamb at what point in our organisation will this be major piece of work that the MDA will do trying to inform the review of the act, the assessment of the impact on the first plan on the basin so we are ready to go in a good place to have an informed position when the new basin plan comes in 2026.
- Mark Lamb responds this is an ongoing piece of work, to try and represent our views. At some point he hopes to present our views on what needs to be included in the basin plan. Mark is gathering Intel to be able to make an informed decision.
- The impacts of the current plan on communities and the Basin have had a massive decline in population. Cr Jamie Chaffey is very keen as a board member to conduct the early work to inform the next basin plan.
- Mark Lamb supported this and reiterated that we need to gather views, opinions and alternatives so he can represent a decision on the key issues at hand; the current plan needs to be dissected.
- There are no designated funds as yet; however they are applying for some funds. Mark has asked the MDBA to figure out a time table for review periods and when the new plan is being distributed. There is no indication on time for when the feedback needs to be provided back for the Basin Plan.
- Cr Jamie Chaffey reiterated the importance of taking the right information from those effected by the Basin to ensure that as an association, due diligence is actioned.

Upper Namoi Water in the Landscape Initiative (WILI)

- Tamworth Regional Council are Members of WILI; Bruce Logan provided an update on this area.
- Council is signed on as a steering committee member for WILI which is centred around the upper Namoi, the idea is to advocate and encourage on how we can better treat water and ensure water is held for longer in the landscape. Evidence suggests that the increased rate and volume of run off is creating scour problems and erosion, it's failing to allow time for aquifers to be recharged. There is evidence that if you can slow the rate of run off moving across the ground, there can be multiple benefits.
- The University of New England who are involved in the steering committee, have several grant applications with the State and Federal Government to try obtain research money to advance some of these issues.
- Cr Jamie Chaffey notes it is important looking at local opportunities to make a difference which will positively affect various areas.
- Bruce will send the Statement of Intent to Mark for his information.

Northern Basin Forum Postponed – propose new date

- Cr Jamie Chaffey expresses his appreciation towards Mark Lamb and Tim Phillips for all the effort put in with the Northern Basin Planning.
- Disappointing at the last minute it had to be postponed
- As there were only 25 people registered to attend, it was appropriate to therefore postpone.
- Cr Jamie Chaffey has since spoken to Troy Grant and Andrew McConville who are the main speakers, they are still keen to be apart of the forum and want to hear the ideas.
- There is a lot to share in Region 11, specifically the work with Tamworth Council and their re-use and education in communities of water.
- More connection needs to be created early to promote awareness of the MDA membership, to help support increased attendance.
- Cr Russell Web suggested it would be paramount to have the appropriate politicians there, at least one of our two Water Ministers. Having the two would be ideal and extremely successful in terms of attendance.

- It was agreed that possibly having the Forum scheduled too close to the September Conference would decrease the attendance list.
- Tim Phillips and Mark Lamb will look into potential dates that will best fit.
- Cr Jamie Chaffey suggested completing a bid to hold the Conference in Region 11 for 2024 and then to plan holding the forum after this.
- Put forward a submission and if we aren't successful we will know by the end of August and we can plan a northern forum before the conference for 2024.
- It was agreed to hold a workshop to those of Region 11 to come up with the bid/submission. The submission really needs to be in by the end of August 2023, there has been some interest by Region 9 thus far.
- Mark Lamb notes he can re-send information on the bid for Albury and the bid for Murray Bridge to save reinventing the wheel.

MDA Membership

- It is still agreed that Mark Lamb will come to Region 11 to drive around with Cr Jamie Chaffey to visit other Councils to encourage membership to the MDA.
- Mark Lamb notes he will provide Cr Jamie Chaffey with some potential dates (4 or 5 options of dates).
- Need to get old members re-engaged, need to build the membership and be reunited.
- Trying to realign these meetings with the BROCC meetings, no members from BROCC attended today's meeting. Border of Region Organisational Councils (BROCC) are Region 11 and a few Region 12 members.
- Next BROCC (Border Regional Organisation of Councils) meeting is possibly in St George around the 9 June 2023, but not confirmed. **File Note:** after the MDA meeting EA investigated the BROCC meeting dates for the remainder of 2023 and 2024 and they are as follows:

Meeting times - 9:00am to approx. 1:00pm

2023 11 August 2023 – Cunnamulla (Paroo Shire Council)
10 November 2023 - Tenterfield (AGM & Ordinary)

2024 9 February 2024 – Brewarrina Shire Council
10 May 2024 – Southern Downs Regional Council
9 August 2024 – Walgett Shire Council
15 November 2024 - Goondiwindi Regional Council (AGM & Ordinary)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next **Murray Darling Association Region 11 meeting** will be held on **Friday 11 August 2023** and will be held in person and via Zoom for those who can only attend virtually (details to be provided closer to the date)

MEETING CLOSE

The meeting closed, the time being 2:00pm.

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