



Chief Executive Officer's Report

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1. Introduction

We have been focused on key activities to deliver desired outcomes. Following the recent Strategic Planning Workshop in Canberra, Region Chair feedback on priorities was appreciated to ensure that we are on track.

The conclusion of the Murray Darling Association’s Basin Communities Leadership Program signals the Association’s continued goal of improving water, and leadership literacy across the Murray-Darling Basin.

A promising development to the relationship between the Murray Darling Association and the CSIRO was heralded through a partnership to investigate and explore a series of strategic growth areas in the Circular Economy sphere, particularly in reference to the biggest land and water challenges.

With continued progress being made, the 78th National Conference and AGM is drawing ever closer, and with it the opportunity to join in conversation, inform future policy, and engage with innovators, representatives, and the leaders of our time!

2. Basin Community Leadership Program

In March, we were able to fulfil our commitment regarding The Basin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) with Face to Face Workshops in a COVID-19-safe environment.

The details are as follows: participants completed the MDA Academy Online Training prior to attending the face-to-Face workshops. The Online Academy covers five modules including: Leadership Theory; Water Literacy and Communicating with Impact.

The MDA worked in partnership with LGA's to support the community, boost the local economy and encourage trade in small businesses. Whilst we have completed the proposed workshops as planned, there is potential to conduct further workshops with targeted community groups.

As part of the programme, we may be eligible for further funding now that we have completed our requirements as well as all requisite reporting.

3. Circular Economy

CSIRO Land and Water has partnered with MDA to investigate and explore a series of strategic growth areas that align with the biggest land and water challenges faced by Australian governments/agencies, industries and communities. These growth areas will build on capabilities and that of our partners and transform the boundaries of the types of products, research projects and services we might collaborate on.

They have identified Repurposing Waste / Circular Economy as a strategic growth area and we are interested in validating this with LGA's as a valued partner. We would like to understand more about how LGA's work within the repurposing waste / circular economy area within their organisation. They are also keen to hear about any future aspirations they might have in regard to infrastructure solutions they need now and into the future. To capture these insights. We are planning a series of meetings that will help inform the future of this growth area and ensure they can design solutions that are of value for all.

CSIRO will be supporting the MDA in recognition of the invaluable work

4. Key Meetings and Engagements

Date	Event/meeting	Location
20/1/22	Meeting with Lu Hogan – UNE	
28/1/22	Meeting with Lisa Neville Victorian Minister for Water	
4/2/22	Meeting with the One Basin CRC	Held Virtually
7/2/22	Partners Meeting – Armidale Node of the S QLD and N NSW Drought Hub	Held Virtually
10/2/22	Meeting with Michael Stewardson – Uni Melbourne	Melbourne
15/2/22	Rod Corfe - 2WEB – Radio Interview	Held Virtually
17/2/22	Meeting with Inspector-General of Water Compliance Troy Grant	
17/2/22	Meeting with Jim Bentley	
18/2/22	Legalwise 13 th Water Symposium: Spotlight on Legal and Regulatory Reforms	Sydney
23/2/22	Meeting with Dave Tonkin, Beau Hug, Sue Hyde – Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Canberra
24/2/22	Meeting with Hon Sussan Ley MP	Canberra
24/2/22	Meeting with Terri Butler MP – Shadow Minister for Environment & Water	Canberra
3/3/22	MRLGA Water Position Paper Working Group Meeting	Held Virtually
10/3/22	Meeting with Luke Friend DPIE	Albury
11/3/22	Meeting with Towong Shire Council	Towong
16/3/22	DPIE – Water Engagement Roundup March 2022	Held Virtually
25/3/22	Darling Downs & SW QLD Council of Mayors Meeting	Attended Virtually
21/3/22	BCLP – Rochester Workshop	Rochester
23/3/22	BCLP – Mildura Workshop	Mildura
28/3/22	BCLP – Cobdogla, Berri-Barmera Workshop	Berri-Barmera
29/3/22	BCLP – Loxton Workshop	Loxton
30/3/22	BCLP – Swan Reach Workshop	Swan Reach
31/3/22	BCLP – Lower Lakes Workshop	Goolwa
1/4/22	Water Subcommittee Meeting	Held Virtually
5/4/22	MDA – CSIRO Meeting – Circular Economy Market Analysis	Held Virtually
7/4/22	MDBA – April Peak Groups Briefing 2022	Held Virtually
8/4/22	DPIE – Regional Water Strategies – Peak Stakeholder Engagement	Held Virtually
13/4/22	MDA – CSIRO Meeting – Circular Economy Market Analysis	Held Virtually
14/4/22	MRLGA Water Position Paper Working Group Meeting	Held Virtually
20/4/22	DPIE Water Engagement roundup	Held Virtually
26/4/22	Meeting with Tallangatta Shire Council	Tallangatta
28/4/22	AlburyCity Council - Digital Community Leaders Forum	Held Virtually
6/5/22	MRLGA Water Position Paper Working Group Meeting	Held Virtually

5. 78th National Conference and AGM

We have just been informed that we were successful in securing a small grant to support our National Conference in September.

On behalf of the team here, I am absolutely thrilled to officially launch the webpage and invite you to the ***Murray Darling Association's 78th National Conference and AGM*** to be held **19~21st September, 2022** in **Albury, NSW**. To register for the event, please visit the conference registration website [here](#).

The theme this year is “Economics, Dams & Infrastructure”. This exciting event will bring together leaders and decision makers from across the Murray-Darling Basin, and will be a wonderful opportunity to meet again, face to face.

The MDA’s 78th National Conference & AGM is ***your opportunity*** to be part of the solution – to join the conversation, to inform future policy, and to engage with the innovators, scientists, educators, and leaders of our time.

Join us in Albury, home to the winding Murray River and its waterways: home to the winding Murray, where local, technical, and political leaders will come together to tackle the big issues of the Basin and forge a future of connected councils, catchments, and communities.

The program for presenters and guest speakers is well underway and the Planning committee are working on all logistical matters to secure a whole Albury tourist experience.

6. Engagement Report on the benefits of membership:

With over 167 councils in the MDB, the ongoing partnership between Councils and the Murray Darling Association elevates local and regional issues and priorities to the state and federal level providing national recognition of local priorities.

Membership to the MDA delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits to each community by creating partnerships, participating in events, and accessing networks and services that align with and support all Community plans, in the areas of Community, Environment, Economy and Council.

We know that councils and the local government sector are increasingly resource challenged and are looking for services, relationships and partnerships that assist in achieving your council’s and your region’s strategic priorities.

Water, land management, energy and community wellbeing are front and centre of almost every council’s priorities. A strong relationship between council and the MDA provides opportunities to

- partner with councils and regional groups in providing local case studies and experience to support regional and national positions and advocacy strategies.
- raise the profile of your council and the local government sector through MDA’s partnerships with the Commonwealth.
- present strategically aligned priorities, objectives, and advocacy to state and federal governments.
- leverage regional efficiencies and Basin-scale capability and positions.

Benefits to your community.

The MDA fosters a culture of community collaboration and leadership development to improve social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Working together with member councils and our regions, we achieve policy change and ensure local knowledge informs the national dialogue on water reform, land management, environmental sustainability, leadership development and education, and regional economic diversification.

Council's participation at MDA region and national meetings builds regional relationships and elevates the community's priorities to the state and federal level, informing decisions and outcomes that impact your local area.

Benefits to your environment.

There is no future on a dry riverbed. At the core of our vision is a strong emphasis on science and education to inform policies for the sustainable management of Basin resources to ensure a healthy and prosperous future.

The MDA's vision, which drives our strategic and operational direction, is for *local government and communities to work together to achieve a healthy, vibrant, and thriving Murray-Darling Basin*. As a result, the MDA has:

- Partnered with CSIRO with a focus on science and education to address some of the Basin's toughest challenges.
- Advocated for and represented local government in environmental issues, including floodplain harvesting etc.
- Partnered with Murray-Darling Basin Authority, better supporting local government through information sharing and representation.
- Supported regions to develop Climate Ready Communities statements

Benefits to your economy.

For many, if not all, Basin communities, water security plays an important role in economic growth and sustainability. Through the MDA's regional alignments and partnerships, member councils leverage the value of knowledge sharing across the local government and regional development sectors to peruse water quality, water security and other priorities.

The MDA provides member councils with partnerships that support regional economic development and diversification initiatives.

Benefits to your council.

Our mission is to provide high value services to our members, and their communities by delivering quality projects, events and products create enduring value for Basin communities and governments.

Our achievements

The Murray Darling Association has been successful in shifting policies to better reflect the needs of the Basin communities, and we are continuing to grow our reach and impact as portrayed in our [Vision 2025 Strategic Plan](#).

The relationship between the MDA and our member Councils contributes strongly to the development of the local government sector as a whole and our collective role in ensuring a vibrant, sustainable future for the Murray-Darling Basin.

Mark D. Lamb

Chief Executive Officer