



Chief Executive Officer's Report

March 2022

Mark Lamb
m.lamb@mda.asn.au

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Key areas of focus and prioritisation:	2
Pillar 1 – Member services	2
Pillar 2 – Science & education	3
Pillar 3 – Leadership & engagement	3
Pillar 4 – Corporate development	3
3. Key Meetings and Engagements	3
4. 78th National Conference and AGM	3
5. Basin Community Leadership Program	4
6. Engagement Report on the benefits of membership:	4

1. Introduction

Despite only being in the role a very short time, I have worked hard to get my head around the key aspects of the role. The Water Family is very complex and there are many key stakeholders. Nevertheless, I am currently focused on the following key areas:

2. Key areas of focus and prioritisation:

Further to the strategic planning workshop I have drawn some early conclusions based on some of the early feedback.

Pillar 1 – Member services

Membership is critical to any peak body and we have some work to do in this regard. We have already begun to approach non-member Councils with a view to follow up visits.

The BCLP is an immediate priority and we plan to deliver key outcomes by end of March.

Pillar 2 – Science & education

Partnership with key stakeholder organisations is not only important, it may also assist with future funding opportunities.

Pillar 3 – Leadership & engagement

We need to be leading from the front and be seen. MOU's are one method of engagement, however, we need to ensure that it achieves desired outcomes.

Pillar 4 – Corporate development

Once we have delivered BCLP, perhaps there is an opportunity to deliver workshops in the future?

3. Key Meetings and Engagements

Date	Event/meeting	Location
20/1/22	Lou Hogan UNE (Drought Resilience)	
28/1/22	Meeting with Lisa Neville – VIC Minister for Water	
4/2/22	One Basin CRC	Held Virtually
7/2/22	Lu Hogan – Partners meeting – Armidale Node of the S QLD and N NSW Drought Hub	Held Virtually
10/2/22	Uni Melbourne – Michael Stewardson	Melbourne
15/2/22	Radio Interview with Rod Corfe from 2WEB	Held Virtually
18/2/22	13 th Legalwise Water Symposium: Spotlight on Legal and Regulatory Reforms	Sydney
22/2/22	Meeting with the CSIRO	Canberra
23/2/22	Meeting with Dave Tonkin, Beau Hug, Sue Hyde	Canberra
24/2/22	Meeting with Hon Sussan Ley MP	Canberra
24/2/22	Meeting with Jane Wagner – AS Finance Department	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

4. 78th National Conference and AGM

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.

5. Basin Community Leadership Program

The Basin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) will recommence Face to Face Workshops in a COVID-19-safe environment this March.

The details are as follows:

Recruitment is underway for these workshops with participants completing 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 will work in partnership with each of these towns to support the community, boost the local economy and encourage trade in small businesses with the remainder of the workshops to be rolled out across the rest of the year in the same format.

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