



CEO's Report

July and August 2021

Murray Darling Association Incorporated
ABN 64 636 490 493

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1. Introduction

It is with tremendous gratitude, and great optimism for the future of this organisation that I resign my position as CEO of the Murray Darling Association Inc., a decision that was flagged for 12 months hence in September 2020.

My resignation will be effective upon the appointment of my successor.

It has been an honour and a privilege to lead this organisation since my appointment in 2014, and to serve the many governments, hundreds of councils, and millions of residents of the Murray-Darling Basin on the journey of water reform and its impacts on local government and communities.

I am proud of what we have accomplished on behalf of our members, and for the benefit of all Basin communities and governments. I am grateful for the work that this board and our staff have put in to take the MDA from a regional group of councils to a national powerhouse for local government. These are not achievements any CEO makes alone.

I am still excited and inspired every day by the opportunities before us, by the plan for the years ahead outlined in Vision 2025, and by the people I work with across the Basin. The MDA is continuing to grow from strength to strength, building knowledge, trust, confidence, and unity across our Basin communities.

This is a role that is humbling in its reach and responsibility, and boundless in its opportunity. There is still and will always be so much more to be done.

I leave the position knowing that the Strategic Plan – Vision 2025 coupled with the tremendous array of initiatives and relationship before us leaves the MDA perfectly poised for a new CEO to make their mark and guide this organisation to bigger and better things in the manner and direction their vision, expertise and style dictates.

It has been my pleasure to lead the team at the MDA. I could not have asked for a more supportive Board, or a more diverse and wonderful network of members and stakeholders. I treasure the friendships I have made with each of you.

2. Key Meetings and Engagement

Date	Event/meeting	Location
28/06/2021	MDA Board Meeting	Zoom
28/06/2021	Productivity Commission meeting	Zoom
29/06/2021	BCLP facilitators workshop	Zoom
01/07/2021	Jane Coram CSIRO – post conference debrief	Zoom
06/07/2021	Jim Bentley – CEO Water Division DPIE	Zoom
06/07/2021	Tatiara Council, SA – informal presentation	Zoom
07/07/2021	Dharnya Day – NAIDOC Celebrations	Barmah
07/07/2021	Minister Pavey – post conference discussion of motions	Zoom
08/07/2021	Murray-Darling Basin July Peak Groups Briefing	Zoom
13/07/2021	DPIE – Recurrent funding application discussions	Zoom
15/07/2021	Mike Stewardson - ONE Basin CRC : Partner discussion	Zoom
16/07/2021	Region 1 meeting	Zoom
19/07/2021	MDA Committee of Regional Chairs meeting	Zoom
20/07/2021	Griffith City Council – Council workshop address	Zoom
21/07/2021	ONE Basin CRC All Partner Meeting	Zoom
23/07/2021	Julia Spicer - BCLP Content review	Zoom
23/07/2021	Interviews – Communications and Engagement Officer	Echuca
26/07/2021	Region 9 AGM	Zoom

26/07/2021	Carina Wyborne ANU – Climate Change and the MDB	Zoom
29/07/2021	National Conference 2022 Planning committee meeting	Albury
30/07/2021	MDA-R6 Symposium Working Group	Zoom
30/07/2021	Rose Jackson MLA – NSW Opposition Water	Zoom
03/08/2021	Paul Weller – Victorian Water Committee – Dairy	Echuca
03/08/2021	ONE Basin CRC : Value Proposition Workshop	Zoom
03/08/2021	Mark Dodds – Indigenous engagement NatCon 2022	Zoom
04/08/2021	Matt Pinnegar – ALGA CEO	Zoom

3. Highlights

3.1 One Basin CRC bid

On 30 June 2021 the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources [released](#) the outcome of the last CRC round (Round 22). Sadly, the ONE Basin CRC bid was unsuccessful in that round. The MDA has offered our encouragement and support for the Bid Team to build on their strong partnerships and fully formed proposal to submit in the next round. The deadline for Round 23 is August 24, 2021

3.2 Professor Max Finlayson

In a wonderful coup for the MDA, Professor Max Finlayson has joined the team of the MDA one day a week to support and develop the MDA's relationship with our applied science, research and education partners.

Max offered to join the team on a voluntary basis, saying he is interested because – “MDA is regional, about social/people, and technical, and as we all know, water is not far away from a lot of what happens. And it's complex. And I like being involved, not just a spectator, and not driven by the academic measures that covered the last decade (before that I was in applied research).

Director of the Institute for Land, Water and Society from 2008 - October 2019 when he retired. He remains an Adjunct Professor with ILWS.

Prof Max Finlayson is a renowned wetland ecologist with extensive experience nationally and internationally in the science and management responses to water pollution, mining and agricultural impacts, invasive species, climate change, and human well-being and wetlands.

Max is a contributor to one of the IPCC climate change reports that will appear over the coming year, and has been involved in earlier assessments, one of those included in the award of the Nobel Peace prize to the IPCC shared with Al Gore. Max's commitment and capacity to support and guide the MDA dialogue in the future around climate and adaptation measures will also be invaluable to the Climate Ready and Water Secure Regions project, if funded.

Max has a long and productive relationship with the MDA.

3.3 Enquiry for Educational Visits

The MDA has been approached by a travel agent, Reho Travel, in Melbourne responsible for arranging educational programs for University students. They are currently working with Monash University to create a program where their students are able to experience and explore issues in accounting, banking and finance related to the environment, in particular, water resource allocation and consumption in the Murry-Darling Basin.

The MDA and Reho Travel will collaborate to organise an onsite visit where the students can participate in an educational discussion about the Basin Plan and water management strategies, with proposed venue to be Dharnya Education Centre

There will be 32 people (all 18+) and they will be visiting Echuca in late November.

4. Operational Update

Tim Phillips, a graphic designer and Echuca resident has been appointed to the role of Communications and Engagement Officer.

With a family history closely tied with the regions surrounding the Murray River and work that immerses him within the local tourism industry , Tim has a keen interest in supporting the growth of the communities influenced by the Murray Darling Basin.

Tim has excellent IT skills over a broad range of software programs, including Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, Corebridge, MS Office and Excel. In assisting his father with the creation and management of a blog and Facebook page documenting his personal adventure kayaking the length of the Murray River (Murray River Kayak, blogspot), he has continued to develop skills in social media management and outreach.

Tim starts Monday 16th August, and we welcome him to the team.



Emma Bradbury
Chief Executive Officer