

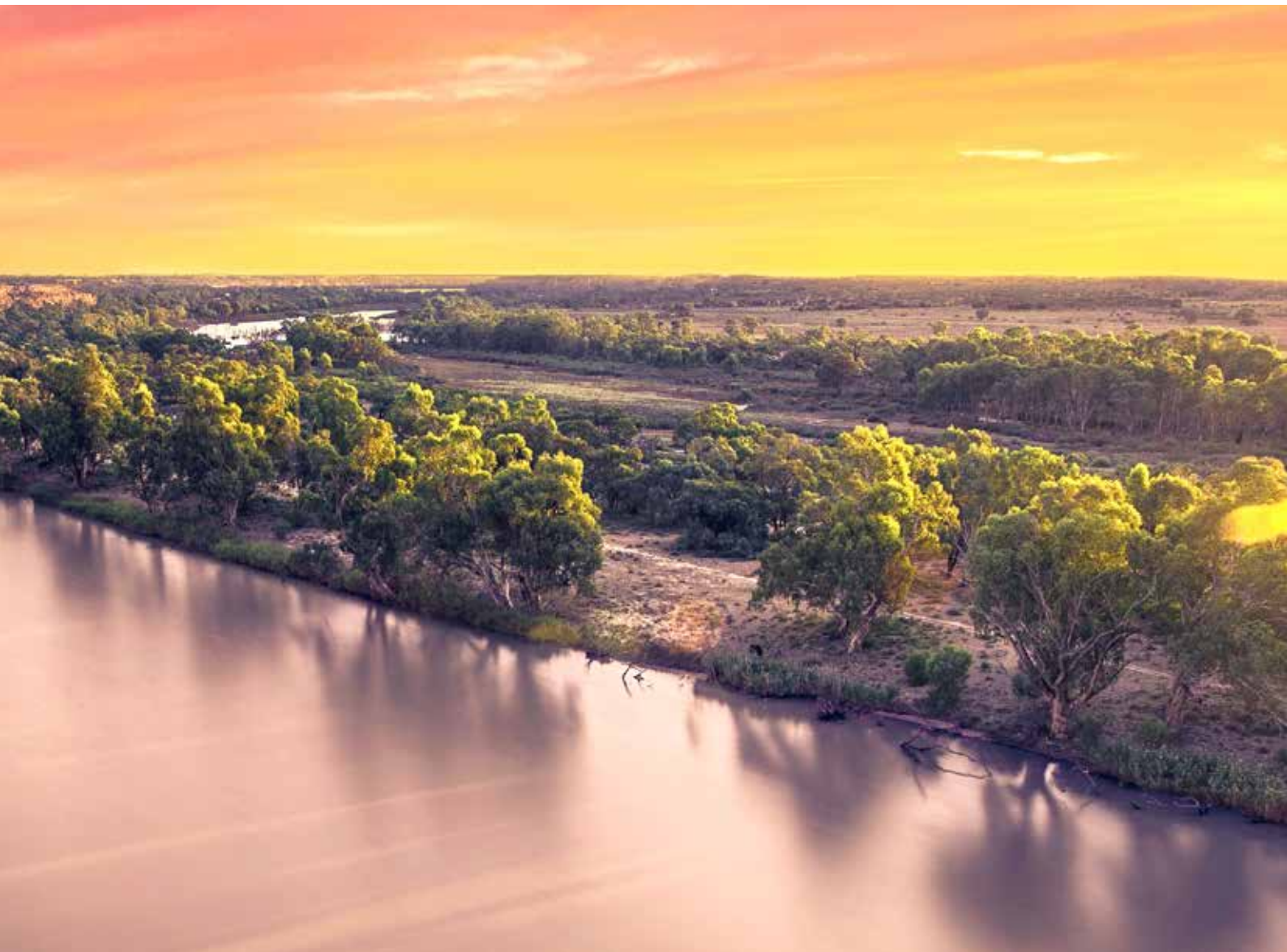


Australian Government



# Murray Darling Association

Report on the  
Social and Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan  
Local Government Data Collection Project



The Social and Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan Local Government Data Collection Project has been a joint project by the Murray Darling Association funded by and in collaboration with the Murray Darling Basin Authority.

We look forward to continuing to work together for balanced management of our basin resources to deliver social, economic and environmental sustainability.  
"It's in the Balance"



Emma Bradbury  
Chief Executive Officer  
Murray Darling Association  
2015

# Murray Darling Association

## Report on the Social and Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan Local Government Data Collection Project

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# Introduction

## Executive Summary

In 2014 the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) partnered with the Murray Darling Association (MDA) in a joint project focused on collecting and assessing the suitability of information available from local government organisations within the Basin to assist the MDBA to analyse the trends and drivers of economic change over time as the Basin Plan is implemented.

One of the ongoing obligations of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) in implementing the Basin Plan is to monitor and evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of Murray–Darling Basin water reforms. To do this, the MDBA needs to understand what social and economic changes are being driven by the water reforms and what changes are being driven by other factors.

To better understand the impacts on local communities, the MDBA identified that access to area specific, current information - such as is often held by local councils may help to develop that understanding.

With its focus and history in providing a forum for local government and community participation in Basin related matters, the Murray Darling Association is uniquely placed to partner with the MDBA to assist in the collection of information from local government organisations.

It is important to note that this project was designed to collect and assess the suitability of information available from local government organisations, and is not to measure and understand change brought about by the Basin Plan. Surveys designed to measure and understand change or to measure a trend are far more complex in design and scope than this project. Such further work may be of value as a result of this project.

This project has shown that local government collects and utilises a great deal of information that is valuable to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation work of the MDBA. It is important that this information is valued and understood by the authority in order to promote the use and management of the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The project also found that the focus of local government's core business is not always directly aligned to water management issues. Accordingly, much of the data collected, while valuable, is not immediately suitable to inform the authority in the most efficient manner.

It is therefore a key recommendation of this report that further work be undertaken to develop resources that will assist both local government and the Murray Darling Basin Authority to access and share information that will assist in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan, felt at the local level.

## The Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is a peak body representing local government, incorporating the views of community groups, businesses, individuals and agencies across the Murray-Darling Basin since 1944. The MDA provides a focus for local government and community participation in Basin-related matters as they impact on our local communities. The MDA has 12 Regions covering four states across the basin with regions associated as communities of interest.

The MDA formed in 1944 (as the Murray Valley Development League), with the objective of providing sufficient water supplies and hydro-electricity to support sustainable production in agriculture, business and industry across the basin. Since that time the MDA has continued to engage with stakeholders across the community and at all levels of government within the Basin to achieve better decisions and outcomes in relation to the management of water and other Basin resources.

## The Murray Darling Basin Authority

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority is an independent Authority responsible for implementing the Basin Plan. One of the ongoing obligations of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) in implementing the Basin Plan is to monitor and evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of Murray–Darling Basin water reforms.

Communities and industries are constantly changing, and so understanding what is causing the change is complex. The MDBA recognises that in order to be able to evaluate the social and economic outcomes of the Basin Plan it is necessary to tease out the influence of other factors that also cause change. The first step in doing that is to understand the base-line data. This project enables the MDBA to identify and assess the suitability of information available from local government organisations within the Basin to assist with the analysis of the trends and drivers of economic change over time as the Basin Plan is implemented.

## Memorandum of Understanding

In December 2013 the MDA and MDBA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1). This was in recognition of the benefits of establishing a strategic alliance for the overall benefit of the Murray-Darling Basin and the communities dependent on the Basin's resources.

## Importance of local government information

One of the important obligations for the MDBA in implementing the Basin Plan is to monitor and respond to the social and economic impacts of the water reforms. To

do this, it is important that information from a range of sources is sourced and understood.

Local government is the level of government that engages most directly with its community, and the MDBA identified that local government may hold information that directly illustrates the impacts of the implementation of the basin plan.

We recognise that local government, as the level of government most directly engaged with services delivery may not necessarily track all such information. Water and natural resource management does not fall into local government core business, service delivery, or in many cases into local government advocacy partnerships. However, the impacts of the implementation of the Basin Plan are most directly experienced at the local level.

We also recognise that there is considerable valuable work done and information collected by our member councils across the basin that may ultimately assist the MDBA to manage the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic; social and environmental outcomes. The MDBA identified the MDA as well placed to seek help from local government organisations in the basin to get a better understanding of trends and drivers of social and economic change in their local area. This work complements the information being gathered and analysed by the MDBA's monitoring and evaluation program.

We felt that a survey was an ideal way to engage with local government organisations across the basin to capture a snapshot of the types of information available through local government in a way that would not add to the burden of partner organisations. The survey focused on identifying and capturing existing data, rather than seeking specific inputs.

This project is a partnership initiative between the MDA and the MDBA to engage with local government to collect and assess the suitability of information available from local government organisations within the Basin to assist the MDBA to analyse the trends and drivers of economic change over time as the Basin Plan is implemented, and to identify any gaps in the available data sources.

## Method

### Resources

To ensure compatibility with the MDBA's Evaluation Framework, staff from the MDBA's Social and Economic Integration Section worked in partnership with the MDA on the survey design. The MDA then engaged with all councils across the basin, inviting all member councils to participate in the survey. An electronic link to the online survey was emailed to all MDA member councils.

Several councils also requested .pdf and hard copies of the survey to assist with collaboration within their organisations. These were provided.

The survey responses were accessible by both the MDBA's Social and Economic Integration Section and the MDA project management team.

The assessment of the suitability of the material is the role of the MDBA's Social and Economic Integration Section. Any further analysis of content will also sit with the MDBA and may form the basis of further work beyond the scope of this project.

## Survey design and testing

The survey (Appendix 2) was designed to ask local government organisations to provide information that they already collect, which could inform the MDBA's social and economic work. This included information on:

- broad economic drivers and primary uses of water
- economic and business information, including
  - commissioned research on the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan;
  - the number and types of development approvals
  - business start-up and closure numbers
  - local business confidence surveys
  - retail activity surveys
- community structure, tourism, cultural and wellbeing information, including
  - health and wellbeing plans
  - community confidence/wellbeing surveys
  - tourism surveys and visitation statistics
  - Aboriginal cultural heritage studies or surveys
- other information about local trends and drivers of economic and social change attributable to the Basin Plan.

The survey was designed using the online survey provider *Polldaddy*, which has more capability than other online survey providers such as Survey monkey, and allows for respondents to upload documents. The survey was tested by local government representatives and the MDBA communication team, and the MDA/MDBA project team prior to being distributed to MDA members.

## Survey delivery

A letter co-authored by the MDA and MDBA (Appendix 3) was sent out via email to all members and non-members of the Murray Darling Association, explaining the purpose of the survey and inviting councils to participate. Two weeks later a link to the online survey was emailed to all councils and organisations within the Murray-Darling Basin who are members of the Murray Darling Association. Non-members were encouraged to join the MDA in order to participate in the survey. A follow-up reminder to complete the survey was sent out prior to the closing date, and then a further submission date extension was given to respondents.

Some councils requested to receive the survey in hard copy in order for them to distribute the questions to different departments for response.

### Response collection/collation of results

The online responses were collected through Polldaddy, with uploaded reports saved to a secure MDBA file directory. Both hard copy and emailed responses were collected and collated by MDA and MDBA staff.

## Results and Analysis

### Survey responses

There were 32 responses to the survey, with councils responding directly to the online survey, as well as by email and letter (Figure 2). There were responses from all MDB states, and from Murray Darling Association Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. This represents a response rate of 35% of Murray Darling Association members, and represents many of the areas that have a direct interest in Basin Plan implementation.

The major economic drivers for councils were listed as agriculture (26%), tourism (21%), business and industry (18%), manufacturing (9%) and mining (9%).

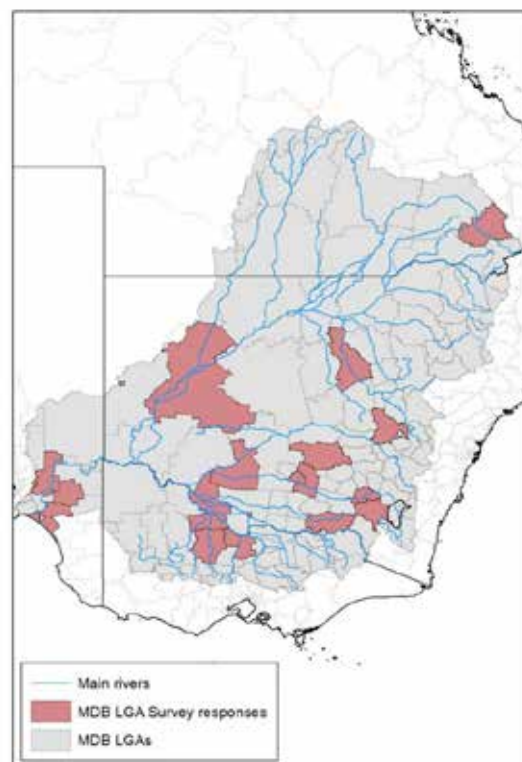


Figure 1: Murray-Darling Basin Local Governments and survey responses

### Submitted reports

The reports provided by councils are summarised in Table 1. Some councils also responded to these questions with small word documents that summarised some of the key issues for their local government rather than being an official commissioned report. Only four councils indicated that they had specifically commissioned research on the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan on their community, with 61% of respondents indicating that they had not undertaken this type of research. A large proportion of respondents indicated that they either did not have



the information or reports requested or did not have the time or resources to supply the information requested in the survey.

A number of commissioned reports were submitted in response to the survey. The reports submitted can be broadly categorised into the following types.

Report type	Number provided
Social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan on your community	4
Business development approvals	5
Residential development approvals	4
Business start-up/closure	3
Local business confidence	5
Local business retail activity	2
Municipal health and wellbeing	9
Local tourism business	4
Tourism/visitation	3
Aboriginal cultural heritage	1
Community confidence/wellbeing	6
Other relevant information/documents	5

It is possible to infer from the survey responses, reports and other information provided through the survey that while much of the information collected by councils may be important in helping to understand some of the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan, there is a misalignment between the much of the data utilised by local government in understanding the impact of the Basin Plan on their local communities, and the indicators currently sought by the MDBA.

For example, while significant investment in rural communities is being delivered across the basin through such projects as the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/water/rural-water>) managed by the Department of Environment; and the South Australia River Murray Sustainability Program (<http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/sarms-iiip>) managed by the South Australian Government, none of the responses from councils indicated that they were aware of the level of investment in their communities, or any changes observed due to this investment.

This finding further supports a point made in the MDA's submission of August 2014 to the Review of the *Water Act 2007*

*It is a common complaint of local government, irrigators and indeed stakeholders across the breadth of the water resource management sector that the number and diversity of agencies tasked with delivering upon the objectives of the Basin Plan has resulted in a sector that is perceived as complex and unwieldy.*

*The level of complexity in the sector has resulted in difficulty for both agencies and authorities to deliver effective marketing, messaging and communications.*

*Murray Darling Association Inc, 2014.*

In addition, only one report provided in relation to tourism and visitation directly linked tourism outcomes with additional water being delivered to rivers and wetlands through environmental flows. However we are aware from other sources (RAMROC anors) that many councils feel the impacts of the basin plan on visitation numbers and product offering reliability very directly. A watering event in 2014 had a very direct adverse social and economic impact on local communities in Regions 2 and 3, and yet this information was not strongly reflected in the survey responses received.

## Open ended responses

The questions at the end of the survey invited respondents to provide written responses to three questions. Eighteen councils responded to Q 38 (What do you believe have been the significant changes to your local community due to the Basin Plan?), 14 responded to Q 39 (Why do you think these changes are linked to the Basin Plan?), and seven responded to Q 40 (Are there any other indicators not already identified in the survey that you use to assess changes in your local community?).

Less than 20% of the respondents to the survey indicated that there had been no change perceived within their local community. One response, from an progressive member council in the Riverlands indicated that there was increased confidence being reflected in tourism opportunities for both locals and visitors, as well as in local businesses. The evidence provided for this response in Q 39 was that the Basin Plan provided a catalyst for changes in confidence, in terms of seeing that some action was taking place.

However, the majority of respondents to Q38 indicated that changes due to the Basin Plan had been negative. The respondents referred to loss of social and recreational opportunities for locals and visitors, uncertainty about future investment in agriculture due to changes in water availability, population decline and migration out of areas, a slowing real estate market and business development and changes in employment away from the agricultural sector.

Respondents also talked about a lack of understanding of the issues associated with water delivery, the impacts of higher water prices, reduced regional wealth and investment uncertainty. The evidence provided in Q39 to support these claims included the transfer of water to the environment, observed changes coincided with the Basin Plan, the dependence of communities on irrigated agriculture and related industries and the reduction in available water. One council referred to work that they had commissioned in support of their claim of the negative impacts of the Basin Plan.

There were two responses to Question 40 that provided suggestions of indicators. These included water trading, drought, commodity prices, age demographics, climate change, the global financial crisis, and farm incomes.

## Conclusion

The survey was undertaken to collect and assess the suitability of information available from local government organisations within the Basin to assist the MDBA to analyse the trends and drivers of economic change over time as the Basin Plan is implemented.

The response rate to the survey was sound, but not overwhelming, and may be a reflection of the levels of concern in relation to the Basin Plan. Councils on major rivers in the Basin were more likely to respond.

It may also be consistent with the limited scope and budget allocated to undertake the survey, as well as the capacity of councils to respond.

Encouragingly, 57% percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in further surveys. Some councils found the online survey to be lengthy and difficult to complete and requested that it be send out in hard copy.

Councils appear to collect and hold information in relation to a range of social and economic factors, as well as developing strategic plans in relation to economic development, community health and tourism.

## Recommendations

1. That the MDBA recognises the importance of continuing to engage with local government to better understand the impacts of the implementation of the basin plan and how these are experienced at the local level.
2. That the MDBA provides a report assessing the suitability of information available from local government organisations within the Basin to assist the MDBA to analyse the trends and drivers of economic change over time as the Basin Plan is implemented, and any other findings based on their analysis of the information gathered in the survey.
3. That the MDBA and the Murray Darling Association undertake a further collaborative project to identify the most effective means of gathering and monitoring information to assist the monitoring and evaluation work of the MDBA.
4. That the MDBA and the Murray Darling Association collaborate to develop a range of resources that will assist both local government and the Murray Darling Basin Authority to access and share information that will assist in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan, felt at the local level.

5. That the MDBA provides a report identifying the work undertaken to date on social and economic impacts, and how that work has assisted the authority to promote the use and management of the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes.
  
6. That the MDBA and the MDA collaborate to establish a steering committee to
  - a. provide continuing leadership and collaboration on strategies to promote the use and management of the Basin water in a way that optimises social, economic and environmental outcomes, and
  - b. Develop and implement a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to assess the performance of actions undertaken by the MDBA to promote the use and management of the Basin water resources in a way that optimises economic and social outcomes.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – MDA MDBA Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 2 – Survey instrument

Appendix 3 – Cover letter

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

BETWEEN

**Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)**

and

**Murray Darling Association Inc. (MDA)**

The parties seek to establish a strategic alliance which will maximise their collective energies, engagement and influence for the overall benefit of the Murray–Darling Basin and the communities dependent on the basin's resources, via the implementation of the Basin Plan.

The parties recognise the importance of mutual cooperation, consultation and knowledge sharing, and through respect and commitment to their ongoing relationship have hereby reached the following understanding:

## **The Parties**

The MDBA was established under the Commonwealth Water Act 2007 as an independent, expertise-based statutory agency. Its role includes advising a six-member Authority, of which the Chief Executive is a member, about Basin-wide strategy, policy and planning. MDBA undertakes activities that support the sustainable and integrated management of the water resources of the Murray–Darling Basin in a way that best meets the social, economic and environmental needs of the basin and its communities.

The MDA was founded in 1944 as the Murray Valley Development League. It is an association of local government municipalities in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria, as well as community groups, businesses, individuals and agencies with an interest in ensuring that the Murray–Darling Basin continues as a viable and valuable asset for all Australians.

The MDA provides a focus for local government and community participation in the major natural resource issues of the Murray–Darling Basin. It provides information, facilitates debate, identifies needs and priorities, undertakes projects and education initiatives, and promotes research. Since 1944, the MDA has contributed to a number of important initiatives. These include water conservation, decentralisation, tourism, the Snowy Scheme, catchment management, water quality, regional development, formation of the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council, promotion of dry land salinity control measures and developed awareness and managed pest plants and animals.

## **The Nature of the Collaboration**

Local government clearly plays a key role in the governance of the Murray–Darling Basin. The MDBA places a great importance on knowledge generation and access to that knowledge by its community partners so that effective water management decision making is supported. The MDBA thereby recognises the valuable role of the MDA in drawing on local government knowledge from across the basin and respects its insight, expertise and understanding of its more than 100 member local government councils and of the wider community membership throughout and beyond the Murray–Darling Basin. The importance of working closely with the MDA will remain crucial as the MDBA continues to advance water reform activities in the basin.

The MDA recognises the MDBA as the primary body for the coordinated management of water resources in the Murray–Darling Basin, with the responsibility for establishing and pursuing the directives and policies as set out under the Water Act, the Basin Plan, in the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement, and as directed by the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council.

This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed after five years of its date of signing.

### **Shared Objectives**

In recognition of the commonality of the work undertaken and therefore the mutual challenges faced, both parties agree:

1. The inter-relationship between an informed basin community and good decision making is acknowledged and both parties will strive to reach excellence in information exchange and collaboration. This may include providing advice, if possible, on relevant matters if requested by the other party, regularly providing relevant and up-to-date information to the other party and cooperating to provide the best possible local government and community engagement and representation on key water management issues.
2. Local government issues within the Murray–Darling Basin should be given due consideration in the implementation of basin policies and programs.
3. To attend, where possible, or provide opportunities to disseminate relevant material at each party's respective meetings, forums and conferences.

Specifically:

- the MDBA chairman and/or chief executive will confer quarterly with the MDA president and/or general manager to provide updates and exchange information.
- the parties will mutually support and, where appropriate, promote information exchange between themselves, constituent members (local authorities) and government agencies as appropriate.
- involve the MDA in the gathering and collection of data as it relates to the MDBA's monitoring and evaluation framework and reporting requirements dealing with social and economic impacts. The MDBA will consider resource implications of such work and will assist where appropriate.

**Resourcing and Financial Arrangements**

This document is not intended to create binding or legal obligations on either party. Neither party has any authority to act on behalf of other parties unless specifically granted.

Both parties shall ensure that there is a direct reporting line in their respective organisations to facilitate efficient and timely information exchange.

Both parties agree to make available and cover any costs of such of their staff and resources, as they may separately find possible and appropriate, to work on and mutually benefit from the collaboration.

**Intellectual Property**

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding amounts to a licence or transfer of any intellectual property or information disclosed. Each of the parties agrees to keep as commercial-in-confidence information disclosed by the other party on a confidential basis.

**Marketing and Publicity**

Both parties agree to consult each other and gain consent before publicly promoting any joint collaboration that may arise from this Memorandum of Understanding.

**Review and Evaluation**

Parties shall endeavour, where possible to regularly visit local government bodies for proper review and evaluation of the benefits of infrastructure investments made as a result of Basin Plan initiatives or other factors that have resulted in new investments for those local government communities and regions, where multiple local councils are sharing investment and working together.

**For and on behalf of MDBA**



.....  
The Hon Craig Knowles – Chairman MDBA

Date ..... 12 Dec 2013 .....

**For and on behalf of MDA**

.....  
  
Cr. Greg Toll – National President MDA

Date .. 12-12-2013 .....

**For and on behalf of MDA**

.....  
  
Mr. Ken Rogers – Immediate Past President MDA

Date .. 12.12.13 .....



**Australian Government**



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Organisation Name \*

Q.1

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Contact person for this survey \*

Q.2

Title	First Name	Last Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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Job title or position in the organisation \*

Q.3

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Email address \*

Q.4



Address for correspondence \*

Q.5

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

Zip Code

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Contact telephone number \*

Q.6

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Please provide the web address for your council's webpage \*

Q.7

# Section 2 - Your local government area

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What is the total population in your municipality? \*

Q.8

Number of council staff (FTEs)

Q.9

Geographic area

Q.10

What is the size of your shire? Approx. sq klm

Economic drivers \*

Q.11

What are the key economic drivers for your region? Select as many as may apply.

- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Business and industry
- Manufacturing
- Mining

Other:

Please help us understand why you selected this answer

## Water supply \*

Q.12

What is the main water source for the majority of your urban and agricultural water?

## Water use \*

Q.13

What are the primary water uses in your region? Select as many as may apply.

- Agriculture
- Urban/domestic
- Manufacturing
- Mining

Other:

Please help us understand why you selected this answer

# Section 3 - Economic and Business Information

This section will tell us about the work that has already been done in your council area, and will enable us to utilize existing data.

The information you provide may be in the form of regular surveys, summary reports or documents that your council already generates, or one-off reports/consultancies or surveys. Important - we do not expect you to collect any new information, but simply to provide existing information that you already have.

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Has your council commissioned any research on the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan on your community? \*

Q.14

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q14, please upload research report(s) on the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan on your community

Q.15

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: business development approvals? \*

Q.16

Other:

If you answered Yes to Q16, please upload business development approval document(s)

Q.17

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the the last 5 years: residential development approvals? \*

Q.18

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q18, please upload residential approval document(s)

Q.19

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

---

Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the the last 5 years: business start-up and closure numbers? \*

Q.20

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q20, please upload business start-up/closure document(s)

Q.21

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the the last 5 years: local business confidence surveys? \*

Q.22

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q22, please upload local business confidence survey document(s)

Q.23

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the the last 5 years: retail activity surveys? \*

Q.24

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q24, please upload local business retail activity survey document(s)

Q.25

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

# Section 4 - Community structure, Tourism, Cultural and Wellbeing Information

This section will tell us about the work that has already been done in your council area, and will enable us to utilize existing data.

The information you provide may be in the form of regular surveys, summary reports or documents that your council already generates, or one-off reports/consultancies or surveys. Important - we do not expect you to collect any new information, but simply to provide existing information that you already have.

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan? \*

Q.26

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q26, please upload municipal health and wellbeing document(s)

Q.27

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: Local tourism business surveys of use of areas around rivers, lakes and wetlands (eg. fishing, boating, ecotourism businesses)? \*

Q.28

Other:

If you answered Yes to Q28, please upload local tourism business survey document(s)

Q.29

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: Tourism/Visitation surveys or statistics indicating use of areas around rivers, lakes and wetlands? \*

Q.30

Other:

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If you answered yes to Q30, please upload tourism/visitation document(s)

Q.31

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

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Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: Aboriginal cultural heritage studies or surveys related to rivers, lakes and wetlands? \*

Q.32

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q32, please upload aboriginal cultural heritage survey document(s)

Q.33

If available for multiple years, please attach all

No file selected

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Q.34

Can your council provide the following information for some or all of the last 5 years: community confidence/wellbeing surveys? \*

Other:

Q.35

If you answered Yes to Q34, please upload community confidence/wellbeing document(s)

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

# Section 5 - Other information

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Is there any other information, reports or surveys that your council considers relevant to this survey? \*

Q.36

Other:

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If you answered Yes to Q36, please upload other relevant information/document(s)

Q.37

If available for multiple years, please attach all

Choose File

No file selected

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# Section 4 - Other comments

We would appreciate if you could respond to the following questions.

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What do you believe have been the significant changes to your local community due to the Basin Plan?

Q.38

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Why do you think these changes are linked to the Basin Plan?

Q.39

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Are there any other indicators not already identified in the survey that you use to assess changes in your local community?

Q.40

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Would these indicators be useful to assess changes due to the Basin Plan?

Q.41

Other:

---

Do you have any suggestions for future surveys?

Q.42

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Would your council be willing to participate in this survey on an annual basis? \*

Q.43

If no, is it due to

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION



**Australian Government**





Mr Peter Smith  
Chief Executive Officer  
Adelaide City Council  
GPO 2252  
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Mr Smith

***We are seeking your input on your community and the Basin Plan water reforms***

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and the Murray Darling Association (MDA) have partnered to engage local government authorities across the Basin to better understand what social and economic changes are occurring at the local level.

One of the ongoing obligations of the MDBA in implementing the Basin Plan is to monitor and evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of Basin Plan water reforms.

We recognise that local government authorities are well informed about the social and economic trends occurring in their communities. To better understand the impacts of Basin Plan water reforms on local communities we are seeking your assistance to identify and evaluate what is occurring at a local level.

We invite your council to provide information to the MDA (for example reports, consultancies or spreadsheets), which will be collated and forwarded to the MDBA for analysis. The results will help to inform and complement other evaluation work being undertaken by the MDBA to better understand the impacts of the Basin Plan water reforms.

The type of information we will be interested in includes

- the current economic and social structure and characteristics of your community
- strategic planning documents
- the number and types of development approvals
- new business start-up or business closures
- indices or surveys of local business and community confidence and
- information on tourism or recreation around waterways and wetlands

Your council may be able to provide some or all of this information, or may have other indicators that you feel are important for us to be aware of. Importantly, we are not asking your council to undertake any new work or information gathering, but to provide existing information.

In the coming weeks, we will send all MDA member councils a link to an electronic survey that will assist you in providing a range of information in a way that best suits your organisation. In the meantime, we welcome any feedback or input your council may have as we finalise the survey format.

This project is seeking to build on and complement other work already undertaken by the MDBA and others, to better understand the impacts of the Basin Plan water reforms. The

Basin Plan evaluation framework (<http://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/Evaluation-Framework-final.pdf>) details how the MDBA intends to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Basin Plan water reforms.

If you would like us to liaise with a particular person at your council, please forward their contact details to Linda Deans at [admin@mda.asn.au](mailto:admin@mda.asn.au).

Should you require any further information in relation to this project, please contact Ms Emma Bradbury at the MDA on 03 5480 3805 or email [ceo@mda.asn.au](mailto:ceo@mda.asn.au).

Yours sincerely



David Galeano  
General Manager  
Social and Economic Analysis  
MDBA



Cr Greg Toll  
National President  
MDA

18 November 2014

*In 2014 the MDBA and the Murray Darling Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding, recognising the Murray Darling Association's 70-year history and important role of representing local government throughout the Murray–Darling Basin.*

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