



Meeting Update

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

Meeting Details: MLDRIN Board of Directors meeting
Date: 6 th -8 th August 2017
Venue: Chifley on South Terrace and DAWR Offices, Adelaide SA. Kurna Country

Attendance

Directors: Rene Woods (Chair), Stephen Atkinson (Deputy Chair), Grant Rigney (Secretary), Stewart Taylor (Treasurer), Kingsley Abdullah, Coral Peckham, Alice Williams, Marcus Stewart, Will Mooney (Executive Officer).

Others: Neil Ward, Susan Goff, Jackie Leuthi (MDBA), Lachlan Sutherland, Vincent Van Uitregt, Noelle Overdevest, Ben Bruce, Dan Jordan, Jan Whittle (South Australia DEWNR), Andrew Garret, Phillips (NSW DPI Water), Fred Hooper (Chair, NBAN), Alanna Maguire (National Cultural Flows Research Project).

Key issues discussed:

- Day one (6th) was spent in an in-depth discussion regarding amendments to MLDRIN's Constitution. Directors discussed proposals for new Nation and Member Eligibility criteria and developed an improved process for applications and approval of membership. These amendments will clarify the process for applications and approval, improving transparency. Proposed Constitutional amendments will be provided to all Delegates and Member Nations in the lead up to MLDRIN's next Full Gathering in November. An open discussion and refinement of the changes will be conducted before they are tabled for endorsement at the following Full Gathering in 2018.
- Directors discussed the current review of the Indigenous Partnership Program of [The Living Murray initiative](#). The review will develop recommendations for the future and funding of the program. Directors expressed a strong interest to continue to co-contribution from Basin State Governments.
- MDBA staff provided an update of [Basin Plan Evaluation work](#). MDBA staff are working with Bakandji Traditional Owners to assess the impact of Basin Plan implementation on their Country and waterways.
- Directors discussed responses to the allegations and issues aired in a recent [Four Corners report](#). A number of different inquiries and investigations have been launched. MLDRIN has been actively involved in the debate and needs to continue to push for appropriate investigations and reforms. Directors are arguing that appointing an Aboriginal member to the MDBA Board will be one practical step to address these issues.

- The Board was informed that [proposed amendments to the Basin Plan](#), including an increase in groundwater SDLs and cuts to water recovery in the Northern Basin will be 'paused' in response to the Four Corners report.
- Directors discussed [proposed amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act](#), which would allow the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to engage in purchase of water entitlements.
- Staff from South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) provided an update on [consultation and engagement activities](#), focussed on Traditional Owner participation in water resource planning.
- NSW DPIWater staff presented on a new approach to Aboriginal consultation for [water resource planning](#). DPI is working to 'reset' engagement approaches. This could involve nation-based workshops. Aboriginal organisations and/or consultants may be engaged to undertake consultation with Traditional Owners to inform development of water resource plans.

Key resolutions and decisions:

- Directors appointed Alice Williams as MLDRIN's representative to participate in [NSW Environmental Defenders' Office](#) Aboriginal Advisory Council
- Directors reviewed and endorsed a range of policies and procedures for MLDRIN, including Workplace Health and Safety, Risk Management and Finance and Accounting. The policies have been prepared by Pricewaterhouse Cooper, with support from MDBA. They establish a strong basis for appropriate management and expansion of the Company.
- Directors endorsed the Executive Officer to sign a rental agreement with Wurrundjeri Tribe Land Council for lease of office space at the Abbotsford Convent. This is an exciting development, which means that MLDRIN will have dedicated office space for three staff.
- Directors were appointed to sit on the interview panel for selection of candidates for the Administration Officer and Projects and Engagement Officer roles. These positions will be advertised shortly.
- Directors agreed to engage a consultant to undertake some project work including evaluation of Aboriginal Waterway Assessment projects and further funding proposals.

Key upcoming dates

- MLDRIN Full gatherings: Echuca, 10th-11th November 2017 and Wagga Wagga or Albury 20th- 21st April (location to be confirmed).
- MLDRIN Directors' Meeting: 7th and 8th December 2017, Melbourne.

If you have any questions about anything raised in this update please feel free to contact Will Mooney on **0404 163 700** or email: executiveofficer.mldrin@gmail.com