

MLDRINews - Winter Newsletter 2017 (2)

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Quarterly news and updates from MLDRIN

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Welcome to MLDRIN News! - Winter 2017

While the weather has been cooling down, things have been heating up at MLDRIN over the last few months! This winter MLDRIN has lots to share including Aboriginal Waterway Assessment Projects, new funding announcements and ongoing advocacy for Aboriginal water rights across the Southern Basin. Please share this newsletter amongst colleagues, family and your community. If you would like to submit info or stories for the next MLDRIN news, you can email executiveofficer.mldrin@gmail.com



Some of the Delegates and guests who attended our recent Full Gathering in Wentworth

Wentworth Full Gathering

MLDRIN Delegates from across the Southern Basin gathered in Wentworth, where the Darling and Murray Rivers meet, this June. The Gathering was attended by representatives from nineteen member Nations. Wurrundjeri Traditional Owners also attended as observers to learn and share information.

Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) reps presented on important work on Basin Plan Evaluation and new funding arrangements for MLDRIN. Delegates appointed an additional ninth Director, Taungurung representative Marcus Stewart.

Some of the key issues discussed in Wentworth:

- Environmental Justice Australia presented on progress around Component 5 of the [National Cultural Flows Research Project](#).
- Delegates reviewed and endorsed a water resource planning animation prepared by MDBA, with input and advice from MLDRIN.
- Victorian MLDRIN Delegates held a special session on Thursday 15th June to discuss options around the management of \$5M, to support a roadmap to Aboriginal participation in water markets, allocated under the Victorian water plan.
- For a summary of discussions and resolutions, you can view our [Meeting Update](#) online.



Environmental Watering Priorities

Each year the Murray Darling Basin Authority prepares a ['priorities' document](#), to guide the way that water for the environment is managed across the Basin. This year, for the first time, the priorities document includes [dedicated case studies](#), exploring the way delivery of water for the environmental can also support water-dependent cultural values for Aboriginal people. MDBA staff worked with Barapa Barapa Water for Country Steering Committee and MLDRIN to develop [a case study](#) focussing on an environmental watering event in the Gunbower Forest. The case study highlights how sensitive use of environmental water can deliver important cultural benefits. This work is a step towards inclusion of Aboriginal environmental outcomes in future versions of the priorities.





New Funding for MLDRIN

In May, MLDRIN was thrilled to receive news that we had been successful in an application for funding from the Victorian Government! The additional funding, provided over two years, will help MLDRIN grow the capacity of the organisation and support member Nations' objectives. It provides for two new positions, a Part-time Administration Officer and a Full-time Projects and Engagement Officer. These new roles will boost MLDRIN's capacity to work with member Nations, share information and manage projects. A new office space will also be secured to support new activities. Keep your eyes peeled for job ads in the next few weeks!

Birrarung Protection Act

MLDRIN Representatives were lucky to attend an historic moment in the Victorian Parliament this June, as Wurrundjeri Elders introduced the the [Yarra river protection \(Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn\) bill 2017](#). The Bill sets some important new precedents for waterway management and recognition of Aboriginal rights and interests. First, it recognises the Birrarung (Yarra River), and public lands along its length, as 'one living and integrated natural entity'. Second, it provides Traditional Owners a legislatively-enshrined voice in the formal custodianship of the river, through the 'Birrarung Council'. Finally, it is the first piece of legislation ever to go before the Victorian parliament with a dual Indigenous language title, and the first to include an Indigenous language preamble. We hope it's the first of many!



Out and about in the Basin and Beyond

MLDRIN Reps have been attending meetings, workshops and events. Here's a summary of some key activities in the last couple of months:

- In May MLDRIN Directors and staff attended the third South Australian

Murray Darling Basin Nations Meeting, on Ngarrindjeri Country, at Camp Coorong, SA. Representatives discussed preferred models for [participation in water resource planning](#). A trip to the barrages on the Coorong proved very windy! (see pic above).

- Following the SA Nations Meeting, MLDRIN Directors met with South Australian Water Minister Ian Hunter to discuss Cultural Flows and implementation of Basin Plan water recovery targets.
- Also in May, MLDRIN Chair Rene Woods attended the Fourth Annual Water Planners' Forum in Toowoomba QLD. Rene presented on the importance of integrated engagement in water resource planning.
- Since March, MLDRIN has worked with Traditional Owners to complete field work for three [Aboriginal Waterway Assessment](#) (AWAs) projects (on the Wimmera River, Upper Coliban and Murray River between Robinvale and Nyah).
- In June, MLDRIN Directors met with key NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPIWater) staff to discuss community concerns about Aboriginal engagement for water resource planning.
- Director Grant Rigney attended a forum in Melbourne in June to learn about [proposed changes to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act](#), that would enable the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to support water related activities.
- MLDRIN representatives participated in Aboriginal Water Week events in Victoria. including a Community Forum to discuss management of \$5 Million allocated to develop a road map for Aboriginal participation in water markets.

Upcoming Dates

6th-8th August: MLDRIN Directors' Meeting, Adelaide SA.

18th August: Submissions close for draft [Wimmera-Mallee Water Resource Plan](#)

23rd-25th August: MDBA [Fish, Flows, Habitat and Heroes conference](#), Canberra.

25th August: Submissions close for VIC Government [Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water](#)

18th-20th September: [International Rivers Symposium](#), Brisbane

Get it touch! If you have content to submit for future MLDRIN News editions please send your ideas to executiveofficer.mldrin@gmail.com



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