



Meeting Update

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

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| Meeting Details: MLDRIN, Full Gathering, AGM and Board Meeting |
| Date: 14 th – 16 th November 2018 |
| Venue: Mercure Hotel, Wagga Wagga NSW – Wiradjuri Country |

Attendance

Delegates: Peter Ingram, Ramsay Freeman, Jenny Munro, Coral Peckham (Wiradjuri) Janice Williams, Alice Williams (Wolgalu), Bella Kennedy, Stewart Taylor (Wamba Wamba), Neville Whyman (Barapa Barapa), Ronald Hughes, Jida Gulpilil (Dhudhuroa) Hannah Dunolly- Lee, Debbie Dunolly (Dja Dja Wurrung), Mathew Gardiner, Elizabeth Thorpe (Waywurru), Jason Johnson, Christine Abdulla (Ngaywang), Gary Abdulla, Kingsley Abdulla (Maraura), Norman Wilson, Tameka Lindsay (Ngintait), Rene Woods, Ian Woods (Nari Nari), Brendan Kennedy, Richie Kennedy (Tati Tati), Grant Rigney (Ngarrindjeri), Bradley Bell, Rebecca Ritters (Ngunnawal), Clare Kennedy, Jarod Kennedy (Weki Weki), Judy Kennedy-Baxter, Lavinus Ingram (Wadi Wadi) Melissa Jones (Latji Latji), Susan Baxter (Nyeri Nyeri)

Observers: Kobe Atkinson, Brett Hamilton, Roland Atkinson (Bangerang), Mary Pappin (Mutthi Mutthi)

Agency staff: Jackie Leuthi, Leia Haskard, Tony Mcleod, Joana Hewitt (AO) Joanna Holden, Giles Hartwell, Alex Anthony, Sophie Taylor (MDBA), Darren Murray, Tim Golland (NSW DoI), Jessica Freame, Maddy Jenkins, Warrick Cooney (VIC DELWP) Matt Dadswell, Jonathan Terlich (DAWR), Lana Hartwig (Griffith University)

Key issues discussed:

- Delegates and directors discussed options for the management of the \$40 million allocated for acquisition of water for First Nations' economic and cultural uses by the Commonwealth Government. MLDRIN staff presented a scoping paper on the development of a Southern Basin First Nations water trust. Delegates provided feedback on the scoping paper and presented preferences on use of the funding to staff from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) in attendance. DAWR are in a 'listening phase', seeking views from First Nations about management of the funding. DAWR is aiming to provide to provide recommendations to the Minister by the end of 2018.
- MDBA provided details of high-level planning discussions to improve engagement between Commonwealth water agencies, Basin State governments and First Nations. MDBA has had initial meetings with various

agencies and is exploring options to develop a 'community of practice' across State and Commonwealth agencies and is preparing a paper for the Basin Ministerial Council meeting in December. MLDRIN Directors highlighted the necessity of having Nations, MLDRIN and NBAN engaged in these conversations.

- MDBA spoke about its Regional Engagement Officers (REO) program and the need for the REO network to engage better with Traditional Owners.
- Lana Hartwig (Griffith University) presented research on water ownership and trade by Aboriginal people and organisations in NSW. Lana's research shows that Aboriginal water ownership in NSW has declined in the last decade. Aboriginal people and organisations own only 0.2% of the SDL in NSW.
- Delegates and Directors reviewed a project proposal, developed by MLDRIN staff, for inclusion of First Nations objectives into environmental water planning. MLDRIN will support interested Nations to participate in the development of the 2019-20 Basin Annual Environmental Watering Priorities. MLDRIN will be in contact with all member nations to gauge interest and resources available.
- Delegates reviewed proposed changes to MLDRIN's constitution. A draft, with amendments, was tabled for consideration by Delegates. Delegates were asked to consider and circulate the draft changes amongst their Nation groups so that they can be considered in detail at the next Full Gathering, with a view towards passing a Special Resolution to adopt the changes. Delegates also highlighted the need to establish a requirement for gender equity on the MLDRIN Board, as part of the constitution.
- Delegates heard from the NSW and Victorian Governments regarding their programs for Traditional Owner consultation for Water Resource Plans. MLDRIN's assessment of the Wimmera-Mallee plan identified some major gaps. The Victorian Government has embarked on a more extensive process of consultation to address these. Victoria is also engaging with Northern Victorian Nations, based on their preferred modes of engagement. Some Nations are writing their own content for the Water Resource Plans. The Wimmera –Plan will be re-submitted for accreditation in February 2019. Due date for the Northern VIC WRP is 30th April 2019.
NSW is planning to hold up to 70 workshops across the NSW Basin, aiming for a target of completing all WRPs by June 30 2019. Some NSW Draft Plans are already on public exhibition. NSW is reviewing the Cultural Access licence provisions in state regulations. Advice will be provided to the Minister on the status of the Cultural Access licences.

Key resolutions and decisions:

- Member Delegates approved eleven applications for membership for delegates from the Wiradjuri, Ngintait, Latji Latji, Nyeri Nyeri, Wadi Wadi, Ngaywang, Dhudhuroa and Waywurru Nations. An updated list of all Nations and delegate members can be viewed online at <http://www.mldr.in.org.au/membership/nations/>
- Members elected a Chairperson, Deputy Chair and Directors for a two-year term. Rene Woods was re-elected as Chairperson unopposed. Grant Rigney was elected as Deputy Chair. The following delegates were elected as Directors: Brendan Kennedy, Kingsley Abdulla, Stewart Taylor, Jida Gulpilil, Alice Williams, Melissa Jones, Peter Ingram
- Due to the lack of female representation following initial election of the Board, delegates agreed to increase the membership of the Board from eight to ten. Two additional female directors were voted in.
- The minutes of the 2017 AGM and Financial Reports for the year ending June 30 2018 were tabled and endorsed by the Membership. The Chair's report for 2018 was tabled and endorsed by the Membership.
- The Delegates conveyed in-principle support for further investigation of a Southern Basin First Nations water trust, drawing on funding committed by the Commonwealth Government. Delegates expressed opposition to any proposal for the \$40m funding being delivered to the Indigenous Land Corporation.
- Delegates highlighted the need for MLDRIN's Constitution to ensure gender equity on the Board of Directors and to make provisions for inclusion of youth.

Key upcoming dates

- 23rd November 2018: Submissions on the [Murray–Darling Basin Water Infrastructure Program](#) close
- 1st February 2019: Release of final report of the South Australian [Royal Commission into the Murray Darling Basin](#)
- Next MLDRIN Board Meeting: 21-22nd February 2019
- Next MLDRIN Full Gathering: 11-12th April 2019

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.mldr.in@gmail.com