



Meeting Update

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

Meeting Details: MLDRIN Full Gathering

Date: 10th and 11th March 2017

Venue: Quality Inn, Dubbo NSW

Attendance

Kingsley and Gary Abdulah (Maraura), Stephen Atkinson (Wadi Wadi), Wayne Carr, Ramsay Freeman, Jimmy Ingram, Coral Peckham (Wiradjuri), Janice Freeman-Williams, Alice Williams (Wolgalu), Bradley Bell (Ngunnawal), Gary Hansen, David Merry (Taungurung) Brendan Kennedy (Tatti Tatti) (Day one only), Bella Kennedy, Stewart Taylor (Wemba Wamba), Ricky Kirby (Mutthi Mutthi) (day one only), Vince Kirby (Yita Yita) (Day one only), Grant Rigney (Ngarrindjeri), Neville Whyman, Sharnie Hamilton (Barapa Barapa), Rene Woods, Jamie Woods (Nari Nari), Betty Pearce (Barkandji).

Key issues discussed:

- Welcome by Auntie Narell Boys (Wiradjuri)
- Chair provided updates about engagement activities since the last meeting (and AGM) in November 2016
- Alanna McGuire provided an update on the national Cultural Flows Research Project (culturalflows.com.au). Delegates discussed the meaning of cultural flows. November 2017 is the 10-year anniversary of the Echuca Declaration.
- Delegates and MDBA Staff discussed a new approach to collaborative project development. MLDRIN and Member Nations will be able to submit project ideas to be considered for further development and funding.
- Delegates viewed a draft animation about Aboriginal engagement in water resource planning, produced by the MDBA and provided feedback.
- Delegates provided feedback on approaches to evaluating the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan on Aboriginal people. MDBA is required to undertake an evaluation in 2017. MDBA is seeking Aboriginal people's input and will be developing a methodology between between March and June 2017. (more info: <http://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/monitoring-evaluation/basin-plan-evaluation-framework>)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Water provided an update of their proposed new Aboriginal engagement model (for water resource plan development). Delegates sought more information and an organisational chart. DPI staff outlined a new model for Stakeholder Advisory Panels (SAPs)

which will include Traditional Owner representation.

- VIC Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) staff updated on progress regarding the establishment of an Aboriginal water Unit in Victoria, including a Project Control Group (made up of Victorian TOs) and proposed models for an Aboriginal Water Trust.
- Delegates discussed a meeting of the Basin Ministerial Council (water ministers of all Basin jurisdictions) that will take place on Thursday 16th March)
- Delegates reported back to the group about key activities being undertaken by their respective Nations.
- The Executive reported back about a program to engage volunteers and more staff for MLDRIN. There are currently 8 Volunteers working on various projects, including the Aboriginal Waterway Assessments. MLDRIN has also provided a funding proposal to the Victorian Government, to secure support an Admin Officer and Project/engagement Officer.
- Delegates held a special session to discuss treaty, sovereignty and constitutional recognition.
- Fred Hooper (Chair, NBAN) presented a draft compact between the Nations of the Northern Basin.
- Delegates reviewed the MLDRIN Corporate Plan (2012-17). Key Performance Indicators were reviewed. The Plan needs to be redeveloped in 2017.

Key resolutions and decisions:

- Reviewed a request for a letter of support for an application to the Board of the Murray Darling Basin Authority. MLDRIN will not provide endorsement to any one candidate
- Full Delegation endorsed a nomination for Membership of MLDRIN from Bradley Bell, as a delegate for the Ngannawall Nation.
- The MLDRIN Board endorsed replacement nominations from Sharnie Hamilton (for Barapa Barapa Nation) and Auntie Betty Pearce and Uncle Badger Bates (for Barkandji Nation)
- Gayle Maddigan resigned as a Director of MLDRIN
- The Full Delegation elected Kingsley Abdullah as a new Director, replacing Gayle.
- The MLDRIN Board confirmed that resolutions passed at the August 2016 MLDRIN Joint Meeting with the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN) are not valid, as the Joint Meeting was not a properly constituted meeting.

Key upcoming dates

March 31, 2017 – closing date for submissions to NSW Status and Issues Papers (<http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/water-resource-plans>)

April 10, 2017 - appointments to the first Aboriginal Commissioner of the Victorian Environment Water Holder, catchment management authority boards and water corporation boards (<http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/news-and-publications/news/appointments-for-water-or-catchment-board>)

Ongoing - National Water Reform enquiry (<http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/water-reform>)