



## Meeting Update

### Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

<b>Meeting Details:</b> MLDRIN Board Meeting
<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>Venue:</b> Panorama Motel, Bathurst NSW

#### Attendance

MLDRIN: Rene Woods (Nari Nari), Alice Williams (Wolgalu), Stewart Taylor (Wamba Wamba), Kingsley Abdulla (Maraura), Grant Rigney (Ngarrindjeri), Brendan Kennedy (Tati Tati), Melissa Jones (Latji Latji), Will Mooney (Executive Officer), Lauren Houtheyson, Lauren Chester, Kaleana Reyland and Likarra Morgan (MLDRIN Officers)  
Apologies: Peter Ingram (Wiradjuri), Jida Gulpilil (Dhudhuroa)  
Agency Staff: Neville Crossman, Rachel Clarke, Ken Scott, Joel Bailey, Meera Joyce, Kristanne Mahony (MDBA), Darren Murray, Ray Ahmat (NSW DPIE), Andrew Cooper (Murray LLS), Nathan Frank, Charles Lynch, Anne Dennis, Stephen Hynde (NSWALC).

#### Key issues discussed:

- Directors discussed the upcoming revision of guidelines for [environmental water management plans \(EWMPs\)](#) in Victoria, to integrate traditional ecological knowledge and cultural values as part of EWMPs.
- Directors discussed the development of MLDRIN's updated Strategic Plan. A draft plan is being prepared by the Executive Officer, based on inputs from delegates at previous Full Gatherings. A Draft will be presented to delegates at the 2019 AGM in November.
- Directors received updates from the Executive Officer on all key projects, as well as from all MLDRIN staff
- All Directors signed onto an online Governance training course ('Step in Step up'). Directors have one month to complete the online course.
- Rene Woods provided an update on the progress of the [Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions in the Murray-Darling Basin](#). Rene has been appointed to the Independent Panel leading the assessment. There will be 5 engagement activities dedicated for First Nations. The Assessment provides an opportunity to highlight the impact of current water management regimes on Basin First Nations. A Draft Report will be presented to the basin Ministerial Council in December and a Final report will be provided to Minister Littleproud.
- Directors discussed the management of the \$40M allocated by the Federal Government in May 2018 for First Nations water acquisition. Directors

expressed concern regarding lack of progress and consultation and discussed a strategy for addressing these issues. It is understood the funding will be delivered to ILSC but there has been no further information provided on delivery arrangements.

- MLDRIN's Cultural Flows Officer provided an update on the delivery of [MLDRIN's Cultural Flows program](#). Delivery will focus on Nations who have not previously been able to capitalise on funding. Initial discussions have been held with Wiradjuri nation delegates and some other Nation reps.
- Directors received updates from MDBA staff and provided feedback on key projects affecting First Nations. Relevant projects and key updates include:
  - Basin Plan Evaluation: the [2020 Evaluation of the Basin Plan](#) will involve consideration of how First Nations interests are reflected in Plan implementation and outcomes. MDBA has identified 6 key questions and a range of data sources to support evaluation. The 2025 evaluation provides an opportunity for focussed, First Nations led research.
  - MDBA is coordinating a report on how environmental water holders are considering First Nations values in watering decisions. The report is due to Minister by end of December.
  - [Native Fish Management and Recovery Strategy](#): MDBA provided an update on the strategy. Funding for the strategy has been approved. A Cultural Advisory group will be established and focussed Aboriginal engagement will be conducted in coming months. The strategy framework is open for public comment til 3<sup>rd</sup> October
- Directors were informed of an in-principle decision from the [Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee](#) to invite a First Nations or MLDRIN representative onto the committee.
- MDBA provided an update on the development of the new [Basin Wide Environmental Watering Strategy](#). MLDRIN has urged the MDBA to include a specific secondary objective in the Strategy that will require water managers to optimise social and cultural items. MDBA have agreed to respond to MLDRIN's recommendation.
- [NSW Aboriginal Land Council](#) representatives attended and presented on NSWALC's strategic plan and water rights advocacy work. NSWALC reps and MLDRIN Directors discussed opportunities for coordination on shared objectives.
- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Environment (DPIE) Water Division staff presented on key activities including: 1) ongoing consultation with TOs for the development of NSW Water Resource Plans. Of 29 Nations within the NSW Basin, NSW have consulted with 17, and consultation reports have been prepared for 11. There is still significant work to go to meet the deadline of delivery of Water Resource Plans by end of December 2019. 2) Development of [Regional Water Strategies \(RWS's\)](#) there will be 12 RWSs prepared across NSW. RWS's will identify key water challenges and identify responses, including infrastructure, policy and planning options. A key outcomes for the RWSs will be to 'recognize and protect Aboriginal cultural values'. NSW will be consulting with First Nations and seek to draw on water resource plan contributions.

- NSW is also exploring establishing an Aboriginal Water Advisory Group to provide an opportunity to look at broader policy settings regarding Aboriginal outcomes from water.

### Key resolutions and decisions:

- Directors reviewed and approved minutes of previous Board Meetings, finance reports and correspondence register for the period since the April 2019 Board Meeting.
- Directors determined to fast-track preparation of a Cultural Safety Policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all MLDRIN Staff and members during MLDRIN Meetings and activities.
- Directors reviewed additional information requested by applicants for Ngurai Illum Wurrung and referred their membership application to the Full Delegation for review.
- Directors considered a request from Northern Central CMA to coordinate an expression of interest process to determine First Nations groups for participation in a study to value the socioeconomic benefits of environmental watering in northern Victoria.
- Directors reviewed an invitation for MLDRIN participation on a steering committee for a 'Refreshing River Management' project being developed by Murray Local Land Services. Directors agreed to review the invitation and respond in due course.
- Directors agreed to initiate a second Expression of Interest process for AWA projects in Victoria. There is resourcing available for an additional two AWA projects arising from underspend on previous MLDRIN projects.

### Key upcoming dates

- 28<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October: [YAAMA NGUNNA BAAKA CORROBOREE FESTIVAL](#), Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke, Wilcannia, Menindee
- 3<sup>rd</sup> October: Cut off date for submissions to the [Native Fish Recovery and Management Strategy](#)
- 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> November: Icon Site Managers and IPP Forums, Lower Lakes SA
- 21<sup>st</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> November, MLDRIN AGM, Renmark SA.

If you have any questions about anything raised in this update please feel free to contact Will Mooney on **0404 163 700** or Kaleana Reyland on **0407031180** or email: [\*\*executiveofficer.mldr@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:executiveofficer.mldr@gmail.com)