



## Meeting Update

### Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

**Meeting Details:** MLDRIN Full Gathering and AGM

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Venue:** Victorian Government Offices, Cnr Koorong Ave and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Irymple Victoria.

#### Attendance

**MLDRIN:** Kingsley Abdulla (Maraura), Ian Woods (Nari Nari), Isobel Campbell, Grant Rigney (Ngarrindjeri), Brad Bell, Rebecca Ritters (Ngunnawal), Brendan Kennedy (Tati Tati), Bella Kennedy, Stewart Taylor (Wamba Wamba), Liz Thorpe (Waywurru), Clare Kennedy (Weki Weki - day 2 only), Ramsay Freeman, Coral Peckham, Jenny Munro (Wiradjuri), Janice Freeman Williams, Alice Williams (Wolgalu), Monica Morgan (Yorta Yorta), Christine Abdulla, Jason Johnson (RMMAC), Lavinus Ingram, Judy Baxter (day 2 only) (Wadi Wadi), Susan Baxter (Nyeri Nyeri), Melissa Jones (Latji Latji), Hannah Dunnolly, Deb Dunnolly (Dja Dja Wurrung), Neville Whyman (Barapa Barapa)

**Agency Staff:** Tony McLeod, Ken Scott (MDBA), Chris McAuley, Bella Schaffer, Terry Chan (VIC DELWP), Brendon Chatfield, Michelle Kelly (NSW DPIE), Nich Sheehan (Mallee CMA)

#### Key issues discussed:

- Delegates provided updates on key achievements, aspirations and challenges over the last six-month (see attached Nation updates report)
- Delegates identified key opportunities, challenges and priorities for funding over the next five years (see attached Nation updates report)
- Representative of Victoria DELWP provided information about review of [Sustainable Water Strategies](#) (SWSs). The SWS reviews provides an opportunity to ensure First Nations objectives are considered in the conversation about how water is shared and allocated. DELWP is also working on reviews of [Long Term Watering Plans](#) (LTWPs) and developing new guidelines for the development of Environmental Water Management Plans (EWMPs). DELWP Staff will be making contact with all Victorian Nations to discuss these opportunities.
- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Environment (DPIE) representatives provided an update on development of Water Resource Plans and development of [Regional Water Strategies](#). Concerns were raised by some delegates about the failure of consultants engaged by NSW to bring draft consultation reports back to community for endorsement. Consultation for

Regional Water Strategies is proceeding in the Lachlan and Macquarie regions. Other regions will follow in 2020.

- MDBA staff provided an overview of recent changes including the decision to appoint an [Indigenous Standing member to the MDBA](#) Board, appointment of an Aboriginal person (Phil Duncan) to the [Chair of the Basin Community Committee](#) and regionalisation of MDBA offices. Tony McCleod discussed emerging issues relating to First Nations and Basin water management. Key issues included: Drought and climate change, Rights, Translating culture and hydrology, 2026 review of the Basin Plan and MLDRIN/NBAN Financial independence.
- [Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project](#) (SDL Adjustment Projects). Nick Sheehan (Mallee CMA) provided an update on the SDL Projects in Victoria and delegates discussed the pros and cons of these projects. Significant concern was expressed regarding lack of informed consent from Traditional Owners. Engagement with Traditional Owner groups on SDL projects is proceeding now and Victoria must demonstrate that appropriate engagement has been conducted before secure additional funds from the Commonwealth Government.
- MLDRIN staff provided updates on key projects including the First Nations Environmental Water Guidance, Cultural Flows program, Water Access for Economic Development and Aboriginal Waterways Assessment projects.
- MLDRIN staff advised of expression of interest processes that will be run through to the end of February 2020, for Aboriginal Waterway Assessment and Cultural Flows projects. Information will be circulated to Delegates and Nation contacts shortly.
- Delegates discussed the opportunities and risks associated with participation in water markets.
- Delegates reviewed correspondence from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) and Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) regarding management and delivery of the \$40M committed to support First Nations water ownership. DAWR and ILSC have proposed the establishment of a Steering Committee comprising MLDRIN, NBAN and government representatives. Delegates noted the benefits and risks of participating in the steering committee and identified a number of conditions that would need to be fulfilled to address MLDRIN concerns. Delegates resolved not to support the current proposed model for delivery of the funding until key conditions have been fulfilled
- Delegates discussed timelines and approaches for assessing Water Resource Plans for NSW. All NSW WRPs must be submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

### Key resolutions and decisions:

- Delegates approved the Chair's report for the 2018-19 financial year
- Delegates reviewed and adopted the minutes of the MLDRIN 2018 AGM held in Wagga Wagga, NSW.
- Delegates Reviewed and approved the MLDRIN financial reports for 2018-19
- An amended version of the Constitution of MLDRIN was tabled, reflecting input from Full Gatherings, Board discussions and delegate feedback since 2016. The Amended constitution clarifies a number of issues around Delegate and Nation membership, application processes and other matters. A special resolution to adopt the amended constituent was moved and carried by the Full delegation. Delegates resolved to adopt the updated constitution.
- Delegates resolved to reject the current proposed model for the delivery of the \$40M allocated for acquisition of water for cultural and environmental purposes by Basin First Nations. Delegates identified a number of conditions that would need to be fulfilled before MLDRIN would consider membership of a steering committee to oversee delivery of the funding.

### Key upcoming dates

- 21<sup>st</sup> December 2019 – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020: MLDRIN Office closed
- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020: Applications close for Round 2 of the [Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program](#). March/April 2020: MLDRIN Full Gathering, SA (Dates and venue TBC)
- February 2020: MLDRIN Board Meeting, Melbourne (Date and venue TBC)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020: World Water Day

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)**