



Meeting Update

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

Meeting Details: MLDRIN, Board Meeting and Full Gathering
Date: 10 th – 12 th April 2019
Venue: Ibis Styles Canberra, Narrabundah, Ngunnawal Country

Attendance

Delegates: Peter Ingram, Coral Peckham, Ramsay Freeman (Wiradjuri), Alice Williams, Janice Freeman (Wolgalu), Patsy Smith (Taungurung), Stewart Taylor, Bella Kennedy (Wamba Wamba), Jida Gulpilil (Dhudhuroa), Caitlin Dunolly, Deb Dunolly (Dja Dja Wurrung), Kingsley Abdulla, Gary Abdulla (Maraura), Mathew Gardiner (Waywurru), Christine Abdulla (River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation), Rene Woods, (Nari Nari), Richie Kennedy (Tati Tati), Judy Baxter, Lavinus Ingram (Wadi Wadi), Grant Rigney, Isobel Campbell (Ngarrindjeri), Neville Whyman (Barapa Barapa), Clare Kennedy, Jarrod Kennedy (Weki Weki), Ray Ahmat (Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation), Bradley Bell (Ngunnawal), Melissa Jones (Latji Latji) Will Mooney (Executive Officer), Kaleana Reyland (Projects and Engagement Officer), Alejandro Voysest (Water Policy Officer, Taungurung Lands and Waters Council)

Agency staff: Tony McLeod, Belinda Wilson, Leia Haskard, Brione Craven, Jackie Leuthie, Neville Crossman, Joel Bailey, Daniela Groce, Ken Scott (MDBA) Bryony Papps, Rebecca Harris, Jody Swirepik (CEWO), Matt Dadswell, Jonathan Terlich, Sue Buckle (DAWR), Karen Lau, Jess Freame (VIC DELWP), Darren Murray, Peter Hyde (NSW Dol), Billy Van Uitregt (SA DEW), Rhonda Butcher (Alluvium).

Key issues discussed:

- Nation reports: Delegates provided Nation updates covering key activities, issues and objectives for their community and Country. A summary document outlining delegates inputs has been prepared and is attached.
- MLDRIN Strategic Plan: Delegates provided input for the development of a revised MLDRIN strategic plan. The previous Corporate Plan has lapsed and the Board is working to develop a new 3-5 year plan. Delegates reviewed the vision, purpose and strategic goals and provided input. The Executive Officer and MLDRIN Board will continue to work on developing the plan.
- Weather and climate outlook: Delegates heard from Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) staff. 2018-19 summer hottest on record. There is an elevated risk of El Nino event in late Autumn. This means decreased rainfall, elevated temperature and more heatwaves. BOM staff also provided an outline of their [Indigenous Weather Knowledge website](#), and [Seasonal Calendar toolkit](#).
- MDBA are developing a climate change discussion paper and have committed to consult TOs regarding social and cultural vulnerabilities around climate change. 2026 review of the Basin Plan must take climate change into account.
- Fish Kill incidents: Delegates and agency staff reviewed responses to the fish kills around Menindee and other locations Dec '18- Jan '19. Delegates raised concerns and outlined suggestions for restoring connectivity. An independent

scientific panel has looked into the fish deaths. [The Panel report includes recommendations](#), including protecting low-flows and buying back A-Class licences from irrigators in the Barwon Darling.

- Environmental water management: The Commonwealth Environmental water Holder (CEWO) has committed to co-design a new engagement strategy with First Nations. The engagement strategy will set targets and approaches for how CEWO considers and addresses First Nations water-related objectives in planning and water delivery. Please see the information sheet attached to this update.
- \$40M Australian Government funding for acquisition of First Nations water entitlements. Department of Agriculture and water Resources staff presented to the Board meeting (10th). It is likely the funding will be held by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) with detailed delivery arrangements to be determined by a Steering Committee, of which MLDRIN and NBAN may be members. Directors expressed disappointment and detailed concerns regarding DAWR decision-making process. On the 12th Delegates discussed their concerns about the proposed delivery model. The delegation did not make a formal decision on MLDRIN's further involvement in the program at this stage.
- Native Fish Strategy. Australian Government has committed \$5M to develop a new strategy, following major fish kill impacts. The next stage is to develop a business case for the strategy. One workshop was held 10th April. Further workshops will be held and MLDRIN has been invited to participate.
- Representatives from the Victorian, New South Wales, South Australian and ACT governments provided updates on water resource plan development and other projects focussed on Aboriginal water interests.
- Delegates discussed MLDRIN's approach to assessment of water resource plans. All Nations will be invited to participate in assessment workshops to review plans and provide advice to the MDBA as to whether they should be approved. All three South Australian WRPs have been through an assessment process. Victoria will likely submit the Northern Victoria WRP in May. NSW will likely submit the Lachlan groundwater and surface water WRP in the next month. ACT also expects to submit its WRP very soon.

Key resolutions and decisions:

- The Board and Full Delegation accepted applications for new Delegates from the Taungurung Nation, Patsy Smith and Matthew Shanks.
- The Board reviewed application for two new Delegate members representing the Tati Tati Nation. These applications were referred back to the applicants seeking additional information.
- The Board reviewed and endorsed minutes of previous meetings, financials and a correspondence register (available to members on request).

Key upcoming dates

- 10th May: Basin Community Committee, Indigenous Subcommittee Meeting
- 6th - 7th June: Next MLDRIN Board Meeting
- A date and location for the next MLDRIN Full Gathering is yet to be confirmed, but will be likely be held in November 2019.

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.mldrin@gmail.com**