

## 7.4 Murray Darling Association Membership

### REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

TO 17 MARCH 2021 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400088, F0710037

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Community on the Murray Darling Association Membership ;**
2. **authorise the Mayor and General Manager to join the Murray Darling Association for 2020/21 and 2021/22;**
3. **amend the 2020/21 budget and 2021/22 budget allocating \$7,000 (ex GST) each year from unrestricted cash for membership fees for the Murray Darling Association; and**
4. **nominate Councillors \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as delegates to the Murray Darling Association.**

### Executive summary

Murray Darling Association Inc. (MDA) has forwarded their quote for membership for the 2020/21 financial year. This report provides information about the current goals of the MDA, ensures a close alignment to Council's Community Plan and confirms Council and the community benefit from its membership.

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

### Detailed report

The MDA's purpose is to provide effective representation of local government and communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources by providing information, facilitating debate and seeking to influence government policy.

The MDA's organisational objectives are to:

- advocate on behalf of Basin communities
- use local knowledge and expertise to fully understand regional issues
- act as a two-way conduit for information and discussion between our communities and governments
- encourage and facilitate debate about the things that matter for the Basin's future
- explore options to achieve sound solutions to regional issues
- test information to ensure a sound base for those options
- be an educational resource for the Basin.

The MDA's functions align with Council's Community Plan outcomes, goals and strategies. Membership with the MDA will provide a benefit to the Mid-Western community at large.

Two Councillors can be nominated as MWRC representatives.

## Community Plan implications

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Good Governance</b>
Goal	Strong civic leadership
Strategy	Provide strong representation for the community at Regional, State and Federal levels

## Strategic implications

### **Council Strategies**

Community Strategic Plan

### **Council Policies**

Provision of Expenses and Facilities to Councillors

### **Legislation**

Not applicable

## Financial implications

Membership of Murray Darling Association for 2020/2021 is \$6,681.64 (ex GST)

The attendance by Councillors at these external committees and other organisations may incur a travel cost to Council, provision for which is included in the budget and is subject to the relevant policy.

## Associated Risks

Nil.

SIMON JONES

DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

4 March 2021

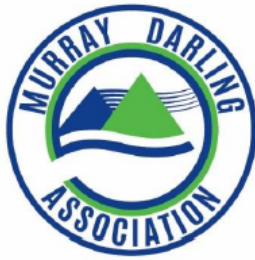
*Attachments:*

1. Invitation to renew membership - Murray Darling Association.
2. Quote - Murray Darling Association Membership.
3. Fact Sheet - Murray Darling Association.
4. MDA Membership Policy.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM

GENERAL MANAGER



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P.O. Box 1268  
Echuca, Vic 3564

February 2021

Mayor Des Kennedy and Council  
General Manager Brad Cam  
Mid-Western Regional Council  
PO Box 156  
Mudgee NSW 2850

Dear Mayor Kennedy and Brad

Thank you for allowing time for Mayor Davies and myself to present to your council last week.

Further to that presentation I would like to invite your council to renew your membership with the MDA, and to add your contribution to the issues of water security for councils and communities across your region.

The following detailed information about the benefit to member councils and their communities of membership to the association may assist. This information may be particularly useful as your council prepares its annual budget.

As you are aware, the MDA is the peak body representing councils across the Murray-Darling Basin.

With over 167 councils in the MDB, the ongoing partnership between your Council and the Murray Darling Association elevates local and regional issues and priorities to the state and federal level providing national recognition of local priorities.

Your membership to the MDA delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits to your community by creating partnerships, participating in events, and accessing networks and services that align with and support your Communities plan, in the areas of Community, Environment, Economy and Council.

We know that councils and the local government sector are increasingly resource challenged and are looking for services, relationships and partnerships that assist in achieving your council's and your region's strategic priorities.

Water, land management, energy and community wellbeing are front and centre of almost every council's priorities. A strong relationship between council and the MDA provides opportunities to

- partner with councils and regional groups in providing local case studies and experience to support regional and national positions and advocacy strategies.

- raise the profile of your council and the local government sector through MDA's partnerships with the Commonwealth.
- present strategically aligned priorities, objectives, and advocacy to state and federal governments.
- leverage regional efficiencies and Basin-scale capability and positions.

**Benefits to your community**

The MDA fosters a culture of community collaboration and leadership development to improve social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Working together with member councils and our regions, we achieve policy change and ensure local knowledge informs the national dialogue on water reform, land management, environmental sustainability, leadership development and education, and regional economic diversification.

Your council's participation at MDA region and national meetings builds your council's regional relationships and elevates your community's priorities to the state and federal level, informing decisions and outcomes that impact your local area.

**Benefits to your environment.**

There is no future on a dry riverbed. At the core of our vision is a strong emphasis on science and education to inform policies for the sustainable management of Basin resources to ensure a healthy and prosperous future.

The MDA's vision, which drives our strategic and operational direction, is for *local government and communities to work together to achieve a healthy, vibrant and thriving Murray-Darling Basin*. As a result, the MDA has:

- Partnered with CSIRO with a focus on science and education to address some of the Basin's toughest challenges.
- Advocated for and represented local government in environmental issues, including floodplain harvesting etc.
- Partnered with Murray-Darling Basin Authority, better supporting local government through information sharing and representation.
- Supported regions to develop Climate Ready Communities statements

**Benefits to your economy**

For many, if not all, Basin communities, water security plays an important role in economic growth and sustainability. Through the MDA's regional alignments and partnerships, member councils leverage the value of knowledge sharing across the local government and regional development sectors to peruse water quality, water security and other priorities.

Every year the MDA hosts a range of regionally and nationally significant events delivering economic benefits, both directly and indirectly to Basin communities and regions. The MDA's 77<sup>th</sup> National Conference and AGM is scheduled to be held this year in May at Wentworth.

The MDA provides member councils with partnerships that support regional economic development and diversification initiatives.

### **Benefits to your council**

Our mission is to provide high value services to our members, and their communities by delivering quality projects, events and products create enduring value for Basin communities and governments.

The MDA recently launched the [Basin Communities Leadership Program](#). Funded under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program, the MDA developed the program which is valued at over \$4500 per participant and aims to build capacity, resilience, and leadership skills for the benefit of your community in meeting the increasing challenges of changing climate and water availability.

The program will be delivered in cohorts of 15 participants each in regions across the basin during 2021 and beyond. The programmes are available fully funded or on a fee for service basis. Each funded workshop represents a combined contribution to the regions' economies of more than \$4,800 per place or \$67,500 per cohort. We are genuinely excited by the possibility of delivering this leadership development training in your council, and your community.

### **Our achievements**

The Murray Darling Association has been successful in shifting policies to better reflect the needs of the Basin communities, and we are continuing to grow our reach and impact as portrayed in our [Vision 2025 Strategic Plan](#).

The relationship between the MDA and our member Councils contributes strongly to the development of the local government sector as a whole and our collective role in ensuring a vibrant, sustainable future for the Murray-Darling Basin.

I look forward to continuing to work with your Mid-Western Regional Council in the years ahead to deliver benefits to yours and all Basin communities and council.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at [ceo@mda.asn.au](mailto:ceo@mda.asn.au), call 03 5480 3805.

Kind Regards



Emma Bradbury  
Chief Executive Officer



## QUOTE

Mid-Western Regional Council  
Mr Brad Cam  
General Manager  
PO Box 156  
MUDGEES NSW 2850  
ABN: 96 149 391 332

**Date**  
23 Feb 2021

**Quote Number**  
QU-601

**Reference**  
Membership Fee

**ABN**  
64 636 490 493

MURRAY DARLING  
ASSOCIATION  
INCORPORATED  
Attention: Emma Bradbury  
Level 1, 250 Anstruther  
Street  
PO Box 1268  
ECHUCA VIC 3564

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	GST	Amount AUD
Membership of Murray Darling Association 2020/2021 Fees calculated at \$0.305 per head of population, capped at \$6,681.82. Population based on latest ABS census data. Cap applies at 21,907 population.	21907.00	0.305	10%	6,681.64
			Subtotal	6,681.64
			TOTAL GST 10%	668.16
			TOTAL AUD	7,349.80

# MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION INC.

## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION



The Murray Darling Association was founded in August 1944 as the Murray Valley Development League, with the aim of promoting inland development and decentralisation and encouraging communities to 'be conscious of their common heritage, the Murray River'. The league was pivotal in ensuring the completion of the Snowy Scheme and from the beginning worked towards improving and promoting the health and viability of the Murray-Darling Basin catchment and the communities within it.

Changing our name to Murray Darling Association in 1993, we have been for many years an active association representing a broad membership of local government municipalities, community groups, businesses, individuals and agencies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria with an interest in ensuring the Murray Darling Basin continues as a viable and valuable asset for all Australians.

“The Association is an important forum to consider basin issues from a holistic perspective. It is a great networking opportunity which allows all stakeholders to share information and experience, debate topics, and learn from each other. The Association also provides an avenue to have a strong voice and input into policy making.”

FRANK ZAKNICH - GENERAL MANAGER  
ALBURY CITY COUNCIL  
— MEMBERS SINCE 1944

Providing a forum for Local Government and community participation in major natural resource and policy issues affecting the Murray-Darling Basin, we represent communities that rely on water from the Basin by providing information, facilitating debate, identifying needs and priorities, undertaking projects and education initiatives, and informing policy at local, state and federal level.

Since 1944, the Association has contributed to water conservation, decentralisation, tourism, the Snowy Scheme, catchment management, water quality, education and regional development formation.

The Murray Darling Association is a representative organisation with regions aligned by communities of interest, views, aspiration and concerns of a large number of people living in the Murray-Darling Basin, regardless of state boundaries.

### Our Mission:

To ensure that the natural resources of the Murray-Darling Basin remain as valued assets for all Australians.

### ACHIEVING OUR MISSION

The association will achieve our mission by providing natural resource management information; facilitating debate and community engagement; identifying needs and priorities; initiating and undertaking projects and education initiatives; promoting research; and working to influence natural resource management policies of governments as they relate to the Murray-Darling Basin.

# ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION CONT.

## AS AN ASSOCIATION WE SEEK TO:

- Encourage responsible social and economic development while ensuring balanced management of the natural environment;
- Foster the involvement of local government in natural resource management and decision making processes within the Basin;
- Provide leadership and a direction to achieve basin wide solutions to local issues;
- Believe that Local Government is central to the effective management of the Basin;
- Ensure that the environmental integrity of the Murray-Darling Basin is conserved and protected; and
- Deliver value to our members through exemplary practice in governance and public participation.

“Greater Shepparton City Council recently formalised our support for the association. As Greater Shepparton forms part Australia’s food bowl it is imperative for us to participate. Forming a partnership with the MDA will strengthen our position when lobbying state and federal government on matters affecting our region and improve outcomes in the management of our natural resources.”

CR DENNIS PATTERSON - MAYOR  
GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL  
— MEMBERS SINCE 2015

## THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- Strong united voice at regional, state and federal level on important basin related issues.
- Networking opportunities with other LGAs.
- Opportunity to discuss water related issues with other delegates who have Water/Environment as part of their portfolio.
- Cross boundary communication between South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.
- Benefit of long history and knowledge accumulated over 71 years.
- Good regional structure bringing ideas and issues from a very broad area to a central space.

“If the Murray Darling Association didn’t already exist, I would have to invent it.”

THE HON CRAIG KNOWLES  
MDBA CHAIR (2011-2015)

## OUR REGIONS

The Murray Darling Association has 12 distinct regions. Regions are determined by communities of similar interests and are not reliant on state boundaries. Regional members meet regularly to consider matters of regional significance, drawing on local knowledge and expertise. The chair of each region sits on the national board.



# MDA Membership Policy

2019



# Membership Policy

This is to be read in conjunction with the Murray Darling Association (MDA), [Constitution](#).

## 1. Eligibility for Membership:

The board of the MDA may consider applications for membership from the following:

- (a) Any Council who is located within a Region
- (b) Any Organisation, which is located within a Region
- (c) Any Individual living in a Region
- (d) Any Council/Organisation/Person who is located within Australia

This policy shall be read subject to clause 6 of the MDA constitution.

Whether an individual or organisation's membership application (or renewal) is accepted is at the sole discretion of the board.

A serving councillor of a local government entity or a member of a Member organisation must not apply to become an Individual Member or allow an Organisation to apply for membership with that councillor proposed as the Organisation Representative.

### 1.1 Categories of membership

Members of MDA may be classified as follows:

- (a) A **Member Council** is a local government municipal entity which has satisfied and maintains the requirements for membership of the MDA.
- (b) An **Organisation Member** is a company, corporation, association, body corporate, partnership, government or statutory authority, community service or not for profit organisation or other legal body (other than a Member Council) accepted as a member.
- (c) A **Life Member** is as identified in the MDA Constitution or elected as a Life Member. The Murray Darling Association, in its sole discretion, can award life membership to any member who they deem is deserving of life membership. Life members have all the benefits of an individual member and do not pay a membership fee.
- (d) An **Individual Member** is a person living in a Region who is a current Member.

Individual members must not use their membership status with the MDA to promote any business or third party which they are employed by, associated with or have a pecuniary interest in.

The board shall determine any disputes as to the appropriate classification of membership status and its decision is final.

### 1.2 Types of membership

- (a) Region Member  
Any Council/Organisation/Person who is living or is located within a Region
- (b) Member at Large  
Any Council/Organisation/Person who is living or is located outside of a Region

## 2. Member Benefits

The board, in its sole discretion, may approve different benefits and structures for the different types of membership and these benefits may vary from time to time. Benefits will be updated and maintained on the MDA website or otherwise informed to members in writing.

The board, in its sole discretion, may also approve or make available different benefit/s for different profiles of members, including select groups of members within a particular type of membership from time to time. For example; a) those members who hold a particular role within local government, b) members who may be employed by private corporations as opposed to government entities, and c) vice versa.

Membership benefits include:

- (a) Regional & National representation of local priorities
- (b) Strong regional networks supporting local economic development and leadership initiatives
- (c) Effective representation of local government and your communities at state and federal level in the management of Basin resources
- (d) entitlement to attend, contribute to and vote at a region meeting (as defined in reference)
- (e) entitlement to attend, contribute to, debate and vote at an MDA Meeting

### 2.1 Board directors, committees and member network committee members

(1) The Board will comprise each of the chairs of the Regions of the MDA existing from time to time.

(2) On an annual basis, at a board meeting, the Board will elect:

- (a) a President;
- (b) a Vice President; and
- (c) a Treasurer

to serve for the financial year.

### 2.2 Voting rights

Voting at a meeting of the association is associated with meeting type, membership categories and the number of representatives.

The voting rights for Region meetings are as follows:

(1) A **Member Council** has category rights to:

(a) appoint 2 Representatives, plus an additional Representative for every 20,000 of population (or part thereof) of the municipality above the first 20,000, up to a further 3, for a maximum total of 5 representatives.

(b) Each representative has the right to attend, participate and vote on its behalf at a Region meeting.

(2) An **Organisation Member** has category rights to:

- (a) appoint a Representative for a Region Meeting
  - (b) have its Representative attend, participate and vote on its behalf at a Region Meeting
  - (c) have its Representative be eligible for election by a Region as a region Delegate.
- (3) A **Life Member** has category rights to attend, participate and vote at a Region Meeting
- (4) An **Individual Member** has category rights to:
- (a) attend, participate and vote at a Region Meeting, and
  - (b) to be eligible for election as a Region Delegate.

The Voting, and Category rights for the MDA Meeting are:

- (1) A **Member Council** has category rights to
- (a) appoint 1 Member Council Delegate, plus an additional Delegate for every 20,000 (or part thereof) of population of the municipality above the first 20,000, up to a further 2, for a maximum total of 3 Member Council Delegates
  - (b) to have its Delegate(s) attend, participate and vote on its behalf at a MDA Meeting
- (2) An **Organisation Member** has category rights to
- (a) have its representative attend and participate at a MDA meeting
  - (b) if its Representative is elected as a region Delegate, to vote as a Region Delegate at the MDA meeting
- (3) A **Life Member** has category rights to attend, participate and vote at a MDA meeting as a Life Member.
- (4) An Individual Member has category rights to
- (a) attend and participate at a MDA Meeting, and
  - (b) if elected as a Region Delegate, to vote as the Region Delegate at a MDA Meeting

### 3. Membership Fees

The MDA Membership fees will:

- (a) be determined by the board of directors from time to time.
- (b) Each class and category of membership may have its own fee structure.
- (c) be charged on a pro-rata basis based upon the date of admission to membership.

### 4. Payment options

Annual fees may be paid by MasterCard or Visa, direct debit, cheque or cash.

The MDA reserves the right to change and/or add any payment options made available to members at any time.

### 5. Financial Members

(a) Only fully financial members of the MDA may, subject to clause 2 of this policy, access member benefits. The MDA retains the right to suspend access to benefits until the membership fee/s are paid in full.

(b) The annual subscription renewal date is 1 July of each year.

## 6. Cessation of Membership:

A Member ceases to be a Member of the MDA if:

- (a) for Individual Members and Organisation Members, the Member annual fee is overdue for more than 90 days and the Board ends the membership,
- (b) for Member Councils, the annual fee remains unpaid after the failure to pay has been raised at a MDA meeting and the meeting decides to end the membership;
- (c) in the case of an individual – dies or is declared bankrupt, or
- (d) the Board resolves to end the membership;
- (e) the Member resigns membership,
- (f) the Member is expelled from the MDA in accordance with clause 28 of the MDA Constitution, or
- (g) ceases to be eligible to be a Member, or
- (h) in the case of an organisation – is insolvent, or is being wound up or deregistered, or has a receiver, administrator, manager, liquidator or other controller (howsoever described) appointed over the organisation or a substantial part of its assets.

## 7. Amendments to this Policy

The board is entitled to amend this membership policy from time to time which will have effect no earlier than twenty eight (28) days following notice to members of the proposed amendments. Notice will be taken to be given where the amended membership policy is published on the Murray Darling Association's website.

### Definitions:

A **Region meeting** is a meeting of the Member Councils of a region usually held quarterly.

An **MDA meeting** is a meeting of all attending Members of the MDA, usually referred to as the National Conference and AGM.

**Original Issue Date:**