

ATTACHMENT TO AGENDA ITEM

Ordinary Meeting

16 August 2016

Agenda Item 8.12 Murray Darling Association - Membership Review

**Attachment 1 Correspondence received by Cr Patterson from Murray
Darling Association 1006**

Email received by Dennis Patterson and forwarded to Council Officers on:

Friday, 17 June 2016 6:00 PM

Dear Dennis

Thank you for your enquiry yesterday regarding the value to the council and ratepayers of the City of Greater Shepparton of membership with the Murray Darling Association.

Since joining the MDA, CoGS has attended Region 2 meetings on 24 April 2015 in Shepparton, 3 July 2015 in Bendigo, and 27 November 2015 in Deniliquin. Unfortunately, CoGS was an apology to the meeting held on the 8th April 2016 in Berrigan – however I understand notification for the event was provided to CoGS delegate Johan, and an apology received due to a conflicting commitment. For that meeting, CEO Peter Herriott was also invited to provide the guest address (see email attached). While Peter was unable to accept on that occasion, in our discussions he indicated he was looking forward to taking up a similar opportunity in the future.

In addition to attendance at regional meetings, membership with the MDA provides your council with the opportunity to support the purpose and objectives of the MDA, as laid out in our Strategic Plan 2016-19 (attached). Key to that 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
- seeking to influence government policy

No-where is this purpose more important than in the GMID, where the very future of that community is reliant on maintaining the viability of the system, ensuring the availability of an affordable water supply for both primary and secondary production, and maintaining sufficient water allocation to maintain viability of the irrigation network.

Membership with the MDA also contributes to the development of work and tools as exemplified in the association's latest project, the Basin Plan Evaluation Framework. This project will deliver a tool that enables communities and regions across the Basin to monitor, assess and evaluate the social and economic impacts of the Basin Plan by establishing a rigorous and repeatable evaluation framework that will distinguish short term and one-off impacts from the underlying performance of the Plan. Application of the tool will produce both qualitative and quantitative data that will enable councils and communities to develop evidence based advocacy strategies. I have attached a copy of the Terms of Reference for this project for your perusal.

There are many, many more benefits to your community, and works to which your membership has already contributed. These benefits include strong networks at all levels of government and across states and agencies, a credible voice valued at the highest levels, the collective voice of over 80, and

up to 180 LGAs across the Basin; and the most viable opportunity of any level of government to collaborate across the Basin to develop non-partisan policies and solutions to our water related issues.

But in order to build on and continue to do this work, we need the support of our members – our core local government members, like the City of Greater Shepparton. This support includes continuing membership – but it is much more. We need our local government members to take an active approach to participating in the development of our work. We need our councils to engage, with the technical expertise of the officers that only exists within local government and related entities. To that end, I would welcome the opportunity to come and discuss with your council the possibility of CoGS taking a lead role in this region.

The MDA will be holding its July Board meeting in Canberra next week. We will also be hosting an informal reception from 5.00- 6.30pm on Tuesday 21 June in the Entrance Foyer of the National Convention Centre, Canberra. This informal event is open to all ALGA participants and MDA member councils, and will provide our members with an opportunity to meet with fellow member councils, delegates from other regions, Board Members, regional chairs and the executive team in advance of the MDA National Conference, to

- Catch up on current issues,
- discuss the MDA Basin Plan Evaluation Framework project,
- provide feedback on the 2016 Draft Constitution,
- consider the adopted MDA Strategic Plan 2016-2019,
- share ideas,
- consider motions for the National Conference in Dubbo,
- explore the benefits to your council and community of membership with the MDA

I would like to invite and encourage any delegates, staff or directors from the City of Greater Shepparton attending the ALGA National Conference to call in to the MDA event and discuss these issues and more.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further advice in relation to your membership with the MDA.

Kind regards

Emma
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