## LATE ITEM

### MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP & EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMP Objective 1</th>
<th>Strategy 1.1 – Advocate to government agencies and relevant organisations to increase services/programs that will improve the wellbeing of the community and foster resilience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A caring, healthy and resilient community.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Document Reference</th>
<th>Murray Darling Association Membership Policy (attached)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statutory Requirement</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Implications</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author of Report</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Officers Consulted       | Director Community & Corporate |

**Recommendation 1**

That the Coorong Finance Committee receives and notes the Murray Darling Association Membership & Expenditure report.

**Recommendation 2**

That the Coorong Finance Committee recommends Council continue to pay Murray Darling Association membership fees and participate in Region 6 and Murray Darling Association matters.

## REPORT

### Background

On 16 July at its ordinary meeting, Council resolved the following motions without notice:

187/19 **MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

Moved Cr. Leng, Sec. Cr. Qualmann that Council hold payment of its membership of the Murray Darling Association for 2019/20, pending the Finance Committee reviewing expenditure by Coorong District Council in its membership and participation of the Murray Darling Association.

189/19 **MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

Moved Cr. Bland, Sec. Cr. Jaensch that a formal report be provided to Council in relation to the cost impacts from the changes to the Murray Darling Association Region 6 cost structure before any funding is provided to Region 6.

It is considered appropriate to report on the abovementioned resolutions concurrently.

### Discussion
Coorong District Council is a financial member of the Murray Darling Association (MDA) Region 6, which has enabled Council to lend its voice alongside neighbouring Councils and their communities in support of providing effective representation at state and federal levels for sustainable management of the Murray-Darling Basin through provision of information, facilitating debate and seeking to influence government policy.

Region 6 focuses its efforts on the lower end of the Murray-Darling Basin, including the lower River Murray, Lakes Albert and Alexandrina and the Coorong.

The Murray Darling Association’s Membership Policy was updated in 2019 (attached). The current membership fee schedule is as follows:

- **Local Government entity**: $0.305 cents p/head of population (capped at $6,681.82 (ex GST))
- **Non-local government entity**: $350 (ex GST)
- **Individual**: $90 (ex GST)
- **Life Member**: No fee

Paid up Local Government entity members are entitled to 1 vote (plus 1 vote per 20,000 head of population (capped at 3 votes)) at the national conference and annual general meeting, and 1 vote per region delegate in attendance at Region meetings (Coorong District Council is entitled to 2 region delegates).

The MDA’s Membership Policy cites its membership benefits as including:
- (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

**Expenditure associated with Murray Darling Association**

As requested by Council through minute 187/19, the following activities have been identified as part of Council’s membership and participation of the Murray Darling Association. For comparison, expenditure has been identified from 2016-17 to present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$1,671.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>$1,726.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$1,769.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20 (invoice received, not paid)</td>
<td>$1,804.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contribution to MDA Region 6 Executive Officer position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Murray Darling Association national conference attendance (travel, conference fees, accommodation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17 (Dubbo, NSW)</td>
<td>$3,779.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18 (Renmark, SA)</td>
<td>$1,780.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19 (Leeton, NSW)</td>
<td>$2,533.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20 (Toowoomba, NSW)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hosting of MDA Region 6 meetings (meals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$171.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>$156.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$192.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimal costs further associated with attendance at MDA related meetings such as travel are difficult to quantify and have been excluded from this report.

Council also sent a delegate to this year’s Strategic Planning Workshop held in Echuca on 1-3 February 2019. The total expenditure for workshop attendance was $1,354.93.

Minor additional costs incurred by the Senior Sustainability Officer (in carrying out Executive Officer duties) during 2018-19 such as travel were absorbed into the overall Coorong Tatiara Local Action Plan budget.

### Impacts of changing MDA cost structure

As shown by the expenditure above, there has been a slight steady increase of MDA membership fee costs from 2016-17 to present. The most significant increase was between 2016-17 to 2017-18 ($54.70), and the smallest increase was 2018-19 to the current financial year ($35.83).

As a result of minutes 187/19 and 189/19, Council has held back from paying 2019-20 membership fees for the Murray Darling Association while undertaking this report.

Council has not been formally approached by the Murray Darling Association or the other member Councils to make a contribution, nor been invoiced for the delivery of secretarial services (Executive Officer position) for the MDA Region 6 for 2019-20. This position is currently being hosted by Alexandrina Council, after Coorong District Council’s Senior Sustainability Officer vacated the position at the end of June 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:**