

MURRAYLANDS AND RIVERLAND LANDSCAPE BOARD

Minutes

Acknowledgement of Country

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board acknowledges the First Peoples of the lands and waters we live and work upon. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge and respect their deep spiritual and cultural connection to Country.

Meeting Title: Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Meeting 6-25	
31 July 2025	
Start Time:	10:00am
Location:	Murray Bridge Office, Level 1 Sturt Centre, 2 Sturt Reserve Road, Murray Bridge 5253
Present:	<u>Board:</u> Frances Simes (Chair), Andrew Biele, Samantha Blight, Greg Cock, Brian Lund, Tammy O'Malley, Sam Blight <u>Staff:</u> Amy Lee (Acting General Manager), Jem Tesoriero (Acting, Manager Strategy and Engagement), Michelle Finch (Manager, Business Services), Casey Henderson (Acting Manager, Sustainable Landscapes) Donna Krendl (Business Support Coordinator) Barb Cowie (PIRSA)
Apologies	Jason Size

Item	Item Title
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Agenda check. Frances Simes, Chair, declared the meeting open at 10:00am and welcomed all present, acknowledging the Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and water on which we meet.
2.	Conflict of Interest – No new disclosures - It was noted that the previously declared conflict of interest relating to employment for Tammy O'Malley at the District Council of Karoonda East Murray is no longer relevant and can be removed. - It was noted in Agenda Item 9, Tammy O'Malley declared a potential conflict of interest for her role in council and drought support with the Consortium including Regional Development Australia (RDA), Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board (MRLB) and Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association (MRLGA)

Item	Item Title
3.	Board Calendar The Annual Calendar of board meeting items was provided to the board.
4.	Adoption of <u>Minutes from the previous meeting (5-25)</u> held 26 June 2025 <i>Decision: The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board approved the Minutes of Meeting 5-25 held 26 June 2025.</i>
5.	Reflection on River Reflections Some notable highlights from members that attended the conference included: • The RMYC group presentation was described as fantastic, and their contribution was well received. Their input provided valuable youth perspectives, highlighting the importance of engaging younger voices. There was a consensus among attendees, who expressed appreciation for our strong grassroots connections. The Board would like to offer Congratulations to RMYC and Marne Saunders project staff for their efforts. • The in-conversation with Andrew McConville (Chief Executive, MDBA) and Professor Forest Reinhardt (Harvard University) was insightful. With Professor Reinhardt sharing differences with water allocation practices between the United States and Australia. • The future demographic trends of the Basin presentation were also well received. Highlighting significant trends and findings. • Brendan Moon, Coordinator- General from the General National Emergency Management Agency had an interesting session on the importance of preparedness in emergency management. He highlighted emerging risks such as solar flares and their potential impact on technology and communications systems. There was an emphasis in the need to build redundancies into infrastructure to ensure resilience during severe weather events and other disruptions. • Another takeaway, was the information provided about the Kiewa River, located in the Snowy region. Highlighted as a significant contributor to the Murray-Darling Basin's recharge system. However, it is also among the fastest-drying areas, raising concerns about long-term water availability. • MDBA presented great snippets from the Sustainable River Audits/ Basin Plan Evaluation. • Elevator pitches that staff, and the Water Advisory Committee (WAC) provided were useful. It is worth noting and extending thanks to the WAC and staff for contributing these. • There was broad agreement that, while a diversity of views will always exist, the conference served as a valuable opportunity to build meaningful connections and engage in constructive conversations. Feedback Summary – Event/Tour Review: • Community Engagement: It was noted that there may have been a missed opportunity to engage more directly with local community

Item	Item Title
	members in the planning and delivery of the event, particularly the tour component. • Tour Commentary: Commentary provided during the bus tour was identified as an area for improvement, with limited discussion on critical topics such as the Murray Mouth. • Catering and Logistics: Catering was appreciated although long waits. Feedback was invited to help improve future events.
6.	PIRSA Update: Barb has provided a written report. In addition to her report- • It was clear at the River Reflections Conference SA always lead the water charge. • A powerful reflection came from imagery shared during the conference—particularly the salt cube photo, which visually represented the scale of salinity issues. The comparison to two-thirds the height of the Eiffel Tower left a lasting impression on attendees. • There was interest across the board at the conference to get back to cross state Farm visits. • Barb is involved in a cross-industry & cross-border taskforce for irrigators, renewable energy and mining. She is keen to improve the representation and looking to get someone that is connected to water. • Calperum is looking at becoming a designated Dark Sky Reserve. Offering a soft footprint tourism option. • Wild Dogs- PIRSA are working on addressing concerns farmers are having. Barb will liaise with Casey Henderson regarding wild dogs. • Emphasised the need to get drought projects started to unlock further funding. • Great to see WA hay trucks arrive locally in Loxton to support farmers. • With hay crossing over state borders for the farmers, there is an increased biosecurity risk. More information is available on PIRSA website and Livestock SA. • Barb attending the RDA summit 5th Sep Adelaide Action: Tamika to add to weekly correspondence Barb's Report and Drought Support Skylight flyer.
7.	Chairs Report The Chair provided a written report. <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board noted the Chair's Report.</i>
8.	Board Member's Report

Item	Item Title
	A record of activities undertaken by individual board members was presented to the board. In addition to the written report the following has occurred: Andrew Biele: In addition to the report provided - • Andrew attended a Bushfire Management Session in Murray Bridge, which included an excursion and looked at burn offs in Monarto. • Farmers hopes are stretched further with lack of rain. However, winds are causing more damage in Mallee compared to lack of rain. • Although many farmers have ceased planting, and while there may be various contributing factors, the presence of vacant properties is noticeable. • Higher risks of land degradation with paddocks being left unsown. • Some farmers are replanting and sowing hills just to get cover not for yield but does come with some risks and is expensive. • If we have good rains through spring, there is a chance of higher-than-average yields if all works out. Tammy O'Malley- • Attended River Reflections 29 & 30 July Sam Blight- • Attended The Sleeping Issue in MDB – A webinar on water quality. An informative and relevant webinar on water quality and current algal bloom problems. There is currently no effective system in place to monitor pesticide use, which presents challenges for environmental oversight. incentives for landholders to reduce chemical runoff. Efforts at the local level are essential and can contribute to broader regional impacts. It was noted that actions taken upstream significantly influence outcomes downstream. Greg Cock- In addition to his report provided- • Greg had an informal catch up with Brett Bartel from PIRSA about drought programs. As formal drought declarations are no longer made, discussions were held around what are the indicators that trigger support for farmers. It was noted that the current framework that PIRSA used was developed during Greg Cock's time with them and includes a combination of rainfall data, production levels, and mental health. <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board noted the Board Members' Reports.</i>
9.	General Manager's Report

Item	Item Title
	The General Manager provided their report, outlining the activities undertaken by the General Manager over the last month. National NRM CEO forum in Canberra: • Representation from most of the regions came together to hear from a number of keynote speakers and an opportunity to share in discussions. • There was a consensus that the need to explore new approaches to better utilise Natural Heritage Trust resources to ensure maximum impact. • There was a shared sentiment from the federal government representatives regarding the continued need to deliver more with less which is disappointing • Bird Flu: Australia remains the only country currently unaffected by the global bird flu outbreak. Based on insights shared and in response, our team are developing a preparedness plan. Murray Mallee LGA- Coordinator role funded for the Drought Resilience Plan implementation: • While the position is intended to serve the joint consortium, it has been suggested that it be formally hosted by MRLB. It's noted that the Board support further investigation into hosting this new role. If it is cost neutral and for an initial period of no longer than 12 months, it will likely be approved. Action: Board members and Acting General Manager to have an out of session meeting to discuss their expectations for the new General Manager role. <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board noted the General Manager's Report and attachments.</i>
ITEMS FOR DECISION	
10.	Acting Presiding Member (Delegation) The board were provided with a copy of the Acting Presiding Members for the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board. <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board approve implementing options one (a change to Delegations) and two (semi-official deputy arrangements) as outlined in the papers. Andrew Biele as Deputy will take on this role.</i> It was noted that Andrew Biele will attend the August Chairs Forum 21st August in Adelaide

Item	Item Title
11.	Future Board Meeting Suggestions from the Board for presentations at future meetings included: • Kate Bartlett from Murray Darling Basin Authority • Tim Smythe from Mallee Sustainable Farming • Tracey Strugnell- Wild Dog update • Recording of Algal blooms presentation from WAC meeting • Corella update • Carp biological control program • PIRSA update - wild dogs • Carbon Market and Carbon sequestration • Carron McLeod and her role in local government landscape resource management rather than individual councils. • Ken and Wendy from Mindarie Mine to discuss soil rehabilitation. • Field trips in the local vicinity of scheduled meetings, providing opportunities to visit and observe relevant projects firsthand • Site visits to Grassroots Grants recipients • Climate Strategy development
12.	PIRSA Wild Dog Trapper Program <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board approve recommendation but noting that future funding will be reviewed.</i>
ITEMS FOR NOTING	
13.	Volunteer Events and Celebration Report • Volunteer Thank You Events held were well received. • MRLB are hosting two events for the National Science, one on the 27 August in Renmark and one on 31 August in Murray Bridge. On behalf of the Board Tammy O'Malley and Sammatha Blight will attend the Murray Bridge one and Jason Size and Andrew Beile will attend Renmark. • Pest to plate- 4 September It was noted that Board members find it can be difficult to attend during weeks when Board meetings are scheduled, as well as on weekdays. It was requested that consultation prior to setting dates for events may result in more Board Member attendance at events
14.	Correspondence The Correspondence list for July was presented to the Board. Action:

Item	Item Title
	Tamika to add to weekly correspondence DEW2401018 Letter from Deputy Premier to Mayor Simone Bailey – Mid Murray Council and the original correspondence from Mayor Simone Bailey to Deputy Premier. <i>The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board noted the correspondence.</i>
15.	Action List The Action list was reviewed by the board. Item 7 was raised as a future potential presentation at a Board meeting.
16.	Other Business Andrew Biele was nominated for the Bob Hawke Landcare Award. Although the award was not successful, it was noted that his references were outstanding and there was strong support for the nomination from the Board. Apologies Brian Lund passed on apologies in advance for the scheduled meeting in November. Upcoming Events: NRM Knowledge Conference in Cairns September 8th through to the 12th Greg Crock and Andrew Biele to attend from the Board with Tammy O'Malley as a proxy.
	Next meeting details – 28 August – Location TBC Water Advisory Committee – 14 August Finance Risk and Audit Committee – 6 August – TBC
	Meeting closed at 1:00pm

ENDORSED <i>Frances Simes</i> Frances Simes (Sep 18, 2025 13:45:14 GMT+9.5)	Frances Simes Presiding Member Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Date: 28 August 2025
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