

Murray Regional Strategy Group

Chair / Exec Officer Report

MRSB AGM October 2021

It is a pleasure to present the Chair Report for the Murray Regional Strategy Group at our second AGM and first as an incorporated association.

The last twelve months have been extremely busy, and with the resources we have available I believe we have made significant inroads to developing MRSB as the go to organisation in the NSW Murray Valley on water issues.

Over this time our significant achievements have included –

- Establishing an executive committee and amending the constitution to allow for a members forum membership and an executive subscription
- Introducing MRSB to various organisations across the region
- Investigating, advocating, and submitting to the IPART determination process on increases in fees and charges
- Meeting Sir Angus Houston and addressing our concerns with the MDBA's community engagement process, amongst other concerns. Our communication with the MDBA has improved greatly
- Collaborating and sharing ideas on Flood Plain Harvesting, resulting in a policy position and submission to the inquiry.
- We have participated in MDBA's pilot engagement program with facilitator Mick McQuire, one result has been establishing a website
- An engagement proposal was delivered to the NSW Water Minister and her office, unfortunately we have not received direct feedback, although communication with the department has improved.
- Members collaborated to develop the NSW Murray Valley Adaptive Road Map, a document which has hand delivered a solution to Government. It has led to an accompanying Non-negotiables document and Co-design engagement framework
- We have met with Minister Pitt and Minister Ley, had regular updates with Senator Davey, Helen Dalton and Justin Clancy
- MRSB hosted a workshop with MDBA, NSW DPIE and the Federal Department of Water in May in Deniliquin, which was labelled a success

by all those in attendance. Unfortunately, the second workshop was impacted by COVID and as a result occurred at the very inconvenient time of last Friday

- We have developed relationships with bureaucrats and agencies, to the point where last week we received a comprehensive reply from CEWH and MDBA on operations of Hume and spill events, even if we don't all agree with the response
- During the last 12 months we have written numerous letters, submissions and policy documents, and developed stronger relationships with all sides of politics in the water space
- Since late July we have co-ordinated a mid-Murray monitoring project which involved landholders collaborating to monitor flow events over the last 3 months. The report for stage one has been released, and stage two is in progress
- A review of NSW Murray General Security allocations has been commissioned and we are looking forward to receiving this report

While the wheels of change are extremely slow there is no doubt that we have made considerable progress with the limited resources we have. Lockdowns and COVID has impacted the momentum of our internal relationships which had been established, and hopefully returning to face to face meetings can repair this.

On behalf of Lachlan, Shelley and myself I would like to sincerely thank the executive and the members for making themselves available with limited notice in some instances for Zoom meetings.

Under the circumstances we can be very proud of the achievements of MRSG over the last 12 months.