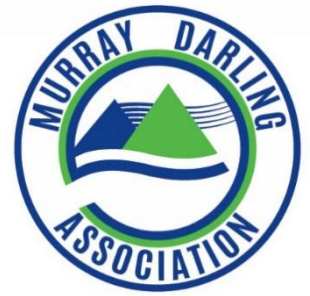


2024 National Conference Communiqué

m.lamb@mda.asn.au
www.mda.asn.au
T (03) 5480 3805
ABN: 64 636 490 493

553 Kiewa Street
P.O. Box 323
Albury NSW 2640

P.O. Box 1268
Echuca VIC 3564



Release Date: 16/07/2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN REVIEW: THE FUTURE OF WATER SECURITY

80 years of advocacy across the Murray-Darling Basin

The Murray Darling Association has concluded its 80th National Conference, held in Tamworth 8 – 11 July 2024. The National Conference featured an incredible line up of speakers and panellists including members from State and Federal Government, Government Departments, Agencies, Authorities, Educators, Basin Leaders, Irrigation, and Industry, and explored *the Future of Water Security* across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Supporting the National Conference, the Murray Darling Association hosted a number of social events based in and around Tamworth and Gunnedah.

First of the social events was the **Welcome Reception**, a networking event welcoming Delegates to Tamworth on the **8th July**, and kicking off critical, and beneficial networking and engagement between delegates from across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Following the Welcome Reception, the MDA hosted its annual **Study Tour** on the **9th July**. Departing from the Tamworth War Memorial Town Hall, delegates explored key infrastructure, Industry, and developments in the greater Tamworth and Gunnedah Regions. Key focal points of the Study Tour included the developing Baiada Processing Facility, a Tannery in Gunnedah, Quipolly Dam and the Water Treatment Plant.

Delegates had the opportunity to explore, and see the progress being made on Baiada's Tamworth Processing Facility, which intends to recycle 90% of its daily water requirements of 4ML p/day for 1M (RSPCA certified) birds processed. Delegates were advised that Baiada designed the facility to allocate 80% of its roof space for solar panels. Soon to be Australia's largest of its kind, and with a likely project completion slated for June 2026, the facility intends to employ approximately 1000 staff, with around 4000 tradesmen inducted throughout the project's lifecycle.

Customers influence ... use of environmentally friendly products and chemicals, a great focus on energy and water efficiency.

Following this, delegates visited the Gunnedah Tannery, a unique facility with only three of its kind in Australia. Through presentations and tours of the site, delegates were advised that through customer influence the Tannery has ensured that it uses environmentally friendly products and chemicals, as well as a great focus on energy and water efficiency, with 7.5L of water used per kg of hides.

Employing 70-odd staff, and with current infrastructure being upgraded, the Gunnedah Tannery advised delegates that they were able to process 2000 hides per day, with the intent to raise this to 3000 following upgrades.



The **Gala Dinner**, held following Conference Day 1 and the 2024 Annual General Meeting, provided a quality networking environment with delegates taking the opportunity to taste local wines and food, as well as hear brief presentations from Sponsors, including MDBA CEO Andrew McConville, as well as the Gala Dinner Speaker, Robbie Sefton AM.

Building a water quality monitoring and forecasting service to support better water management – CSIRO, AquaWatch Mission

Engaging with delegates and attendees across Conference Days 1 and 2, Australia's National Science Agency, The CSIRO, presented and delved into its AquaWatch Mission through presentations and panel sessions. The goal of the CSIRO's AquaWatch Mission is to establish an integrated ground-to-space national water quality monitoring system to support water management with accurate data and predictive forecasting.

Delegates also had the opportunity to engage in discussion with the NSW Water Minister, the Hon Rose Jackson MLC, the NSW Shadow Water Minister Ms Steph Cooke MP, as well as the Federal Shadow Water Minister Senator Perin Davey. Among questions raised the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, First Nations involvement infrastructure development and financing, as well as water purchasing were discussed and addressed by delegates and speakers alike.

Additionally, Guest Speakers exploring the education perspective in the Basin, as well as from Horne Legal, exploring a possible solution for the Menindee Lakes, Public Safety Training and Response Group addressing the challenges of facing exposure, risk and vulnerability in the Basin, Cotton Australia exploring Australia's cotton industry perspective, as well as floodplain harvesting, sustainability in the industry and the Basin Plan.

Speakers from the Natural Resources Access Regulator, Waterfind, the National Irrigators Council, as well as the Murray-Darling Basin Authority CEO, Andrew McConville closed Conference Day 1 with an overview of how NRAR can work with councils to improve water compliance outcomes, water management and water security, water reform, and an overview of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, its review, evaluation, and the focus of the Early Insights Paper.

In 2024, 13 motions were raised at its AGM, supporting the already active 24 motions raised in 2023.

During its 2024 Annual General Meeting, MDA Members raised, and successfully carried 13 Motions addressing ongoing advocacy and representation, governance and progress reporting, clarification of water purchasing details, future water storage and usage in industry, as well as critical Murray-Darling Basin infrastructure and storage projects that support community, industry and the environment.

Delegates engaged in further discussion with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water providing a Government perspective on the implementation of the Basin Plan and First Nations Water, as well as the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and the Inspector-General of Water Compliance providing updates on governance, and the benefits water for the environment provides in support of water security.

Finally, closing the conference proper, the Port of Newcastle and Water in our Landscape Initiative explored the strong ties with industry in the Basin, logistics in delivering produce to the world, as well as pressures and uncertain future stressors in the Murray-Darling Basin's future.

To find out more, go to www.mda.asn.au/events/2024natcon.

To find out more about the Murray Darling Association, go to www.mda.asn.au or follow us on social media.



2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HOSTED BY GRIFFITH CITY COUNCIL.

Located in the South-west of NSW, Griffith is an agriculturally rich region heavily reliant on irrigation from the Murrumbidgee River. Griffith's prosperity and sustainability are directly linked to the water availability managed by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

A lively, cosmopolitan city, Griffith is a hub to the surrounding farming districts! With great local food producers, Wineries, Breweries, Distilleries and passionate chefs it is little wonder Griffith has become the newest destination for foodies! Griffith will delight you from start to finish. One short stay will not be enough!

GUEST SPEAKERS

CSIRO	Alex Held , <i>AquaWatch Mission Lead</i>
	Janet Anstee , <i>AquaWatch Deputy Director, AquaWatch First Nations Engagement Lead</i>
	Nicole McCartney , <i>Government Partnerships Director</i>
	Andrew Higgins , <i>Senior Principal Research Scientist</i>
DCCEEW	Phil Coates , <i>Principal Economist, Water Reform</i>
NRAR	Keeley Reynolds , <i>Director of Education and Engagement</i>
CEWH	Dr Simon Banks , <i>Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder</i>
IGWC	Hon Troy Grant , <i>Inspector-General of Water Compliance</i>
MDBA	Andrew McConville , <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
NSW State Government	Minister Rose Jackson MLC , <i>NSW Minister for Water</i>
NSW State Opposition	Ms Steph Cooke MP , <i>NSW Shadow Minister for Water</i>
Federal Opposition	Senator Perin Davey , <i>Federal Shadow Minister for Water</i>
Local Member	Hon Barnaby Joyce MP , <i>Member for New England</i>
Port of Newcastle	Stephen Crowe , <i>Senior Corporate Affairs Executive</i>
Waterfind	Tom Rooney , <i>Founder</i>
National Irrigators Council	Zara Lowien , <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
Horne Legal	Tim Horne , <i>Lawyer</i>
Public Safety Training & Response Group	Anthony Lind , <i>Director of Special Projects</i>
Cotton Australia	Michael Murray , <i>General Manager</i>
Individual	Peter Waterman RFD , <i>School of Graduate Research Central QLD University, MDA Member</i>
Water in the Landscape Initiative	Wayne Chaffey
	Martin Toms





IMG 0001 – 2024 National Conference; Guest Speakers engaging with delegates



IMG 0003 – 2024 National Conference Study Tour



IMG 0004 – 2024 National Conference Gala Dinner



IMG 0002 – 2025 National Conference Host announced; Griffith City Council.

