



Murraylands and Riverland  
Local Government Association

# Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association

Date Friday 24 April 2026

Venue Southern Mallee District Council Offices  
Railway Terrace North, Lameroo, SA 5302

## General Board Meeting PROGRAM

9:45am Arrival, Registration + Tea and coffee

10:00am Meeting Opens

2:00pm Meeting Close

**Morning Tea & Light Lunch will be provided**

The Board Meeting is open to the public and upon prior request a via MS Teams Video Conference link can be arranged. For online access please email [ceo@mrlga.sa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@mrlga.sa.gov.au) prior to 12 noon 2 February 2026.

*Being a unified local government sector  
working in the best interest of the region and our communities.*



|                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL MEETING OF<br/>THE MURRAYLANDS &amp; RIVERLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION</b></p> |
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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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| ATTACHMENT 1 | Minutes from Previous Board Meeting |
| ATTACHMENT 2 | Quarterly Financial Statements      |

## 1 WELCOME

### Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Ngargad people as the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet and work and we extend our respect and acknowledge their spiritual connection to the land and that their cultural heritage beliefs are still important to the living people today.

### Presidents Welcome

Chairperson, Mayor Ella Winnall to open the meeting.

Welcome Board Members, online attendees and invited guests.

No apologies were registered at the time of the agenda being prepared.

Noting:

- Mayor Simone Bailey has returned from leave and resumed duties as Mayor for Mid Murray Council, as well as her role as Vice President for MRLGA and the regions SAROC representative.
- Mayor Jonathan Pietzsch has returned from leave and resumed duties as Acting Mayor of Coorong District Council.
- Samantha Killington, Director People and Culture is in attendance and representing LGA.

## 2 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Pursuant to Clause 3.3.1 of the Charter and Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), board members are required to declare any potential conflict of interest(s).

## 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A copy of the General Board Meeting Minutes is provided at [Attachment 1](#) (including attendance register).

Berri Barmera Council identified a typo on page 16 (item 12.1) using the word 'surmised' and should have been 'summarised'. The minutes have been updated accordingly in the version attached.

### Motion

*"Minutes from the MRLGA General Board Meeting held at the Murraylands Skills Centre in Murray Bridge on 5 February 2026 be taken as read and confirmed."*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

## 4 ACTIONS REGISTER

- There were 26 board actions from 23/24 and 1 item remains pending.

| 20 October 2023 - General Meeting |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Action:                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1                                 | <b>Charter Review</b><br><i>It would be best to align the MRLGA voting processes with the sector. MRLGA Ceo to research other lga's voting procedures. Agreed that the item is brought back to the Board Meeting in February 2024.</i><br>That the MRLGA Board support the proposed changes to the Charter and ask the MRLGA CEO to have them reviewed legally and any feedback brought back to the board before proceeding. | This was temporarily on hold until the LGA constitutional review was completed. Councils voted at the LGA AGM November Minutes. <a href="#">AGM-2024-Minutes-22-November-2024.pdf</a><br>MRLGA has recommenced the review and will table a draft set of changes at the July meeting. |

- 1 item remains pending from 24/25 board actions including:

| 7 August 2024 – Annual General Meeting |                                         |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Action(s)                              |                                         |                                                       |
| 3                                      | <b>Regional Drought Resilience Plan</b> | - The Consortium (Landscape Board and RDAMR) has been |

|  |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | The MRLGA re-engage PIRSA and Ministers (Scriven's) Office regarding MRLGA's role in relation to MR Plan, Drought Resilience and Drought Response. | working to address this with PIRSA as a MR consortium. A request was submitted in January, and while the initial March meeting was cancelled by PIRSA, it has now been rescheduled for 7 May 2026. |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- There are 22 board actions emerging from 25/26 meetings. 7 items are active and pending.

|    | <b>31 July 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <b>Action(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                           |
| 6  | <b>Item of Business to LGA AGM re: Collection of Landscape Levy</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to liaise with Mayor Thorley on a potential motion to the LGA AGM (from Rural City of Murray Bridge) about advocacy towards the withdrawal of Council collecting State levy charges, and the concept of an alternative rate notice format for the sector that separates charges.                  | - Completed                                                                                                                               |
| 7  | <b>SAROC Groupings</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to confirm the groupings representation clauses (including change in regional Lga president, vice president and proxy (either specific or flexible nomination).                                                                                                                                                                                                            | - Completed.<br>Regional LGA's cannot conduct voting (it must be done by LGA and SAROC Reps cannot have proxy's).                         |
| 8  | <b>Procedure for items of business to National Ministerial Meetings</b><br>LGA to advise of the process to achieve item(s) of business for Ministers Meetings (such as the ones highlighted below). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Ministers' Forum</li> <li>• Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting</li> <li>National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting</li> </ul> | - Completed.<br>LGA responded on 21/10 and the information was disseminated.                                                              |
| 9  | <b>Letter to LGA in support of Mayor Simmons being a nominated representative on the SA Drought Advisory Group</b><br>The MRLGA Board agree to co-sign a letter from MRLGA to LGA in support of Mayor Simmons as nominee for the role LGA representative on the SA Drought Advisory Working Group.                                                                                                             | - Completed                                                                                                                               |
| 10 | <b>Invite new Landscape Board Ceo</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to invite the new Landscape Board Ceo (when known) to an MRLGA meeting, and inform them of a desire to discuss the region having the States highest landscape levy.                                                                                                                                                                                         | - Completed. New Ceo will visit Councils separately.                                                                                      |
| 11 | <b>RDRP</b><br>That the MRLGA Board:<br>Support the MRLGA Ceo to pursue an agreement with consortium partners that establish a 12 month shared role for drought resilience coordination using the \$140k Implementation Funding.                                                                                                                                                                               | - Completed                                                                                                                               |
| 12 | <b>RDRP</b><br>That the MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to negotiate for equal division of delivery funding to each three consortium partners, and for it to progress drought resilience initiatives and report back to the Board on its progress".                                                                                                                                                          | - A meeting with PIRSA is scheduled for 7 May 2026                                                                                        |
| 13 | <b>RDRP</b><br>The Board support the MRLGA Ceo as the signing officer on funding proposals associated with RDRP funding."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | - Completed                                                                                                                               |
| 14 | <b>Personnel Changes</b><br>The Board approve for its banking systems and forms to remove Mayor Phillips and add Mayor Bailey to the Banks SA and BBO system in line with President and Vice President appointments following the AGM.                                                                                                                                                                         | - Underway, but is currently stalled with BankSA.                                                                                         |
| 15 | <b>Flood Funding</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to liaise with Mid Murray Council about the financials of flood funding and if it can write to the crap to access the remaining funds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - MRLGA Ceo met with MMC Ceo 13 Jan. MMC will review more of the financials and be in touch if further advocacy is needed.<br>- Completed |
| 16 | <b>MMC requested</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to invite Hon Kirsty McBain to tour the Murraylands and Riverland.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | - Not yet commenced.                                                                                                                      |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17 | <b>RPC requested:</b><br>The need to list an agenda item for the Adelaide Freight Bypass (and risks/ potential impacts from the delivery stages of this project) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Item raised with Ceo Network on 6 Nov '25 during its meeting with Senior Executives of DIT. While early concept design work is progressing, the State seeks 80/20 funding arrangements with Feds before further design work.</li> <li>- Completed</li> </ul> |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>30 October 2025</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Action(s)</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 18                     | <b>SAROC Reps Attendance</b><br>The MRLGA Board temporarily suspend having delegates attend SAROC meetings until LGA can demonstrate confidence in governance, democratic process, value and outcomes back to the regional grouping, and ask SAROC Chair to speak with regional grouping about solutions for improvement.                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 19                     | <b>One Basin CRC</b><br>Ceo to inquire about CRC's acting arrangements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avril Hogan<br/>Chief Operating Officer<br/>One Basin CRC<br/>Email   <a href="mailto:avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au">avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au</a><br/>Ph   0400 628 257<br/>Web   <a href="http://www.onebasin.com.au">www.onebasin.com.au</a></li> <li>- Completed</li> </ul> |
| 20                     | Ceo to see if more updates/information on CRC can be shared with the Board.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRLGA Ceo met with One Basin CRC Coo on 3 Feb. Details tbc.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 21                     | <b>Sustainable Communities Program</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to prepare a submission to the SCP in accordance with the scope parameters outlined in agenda Item 8.4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRLGA has identified an alternative partnership pathway outside of the grant program and it therefore did not make a submission.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     |
| 22                     | <b>Administration fees for regional delivery on behalf of PIRSA</b><br>That the MRLGA Ceo liaise with PIRSA Ceo about agenda Items 8.5 with a view to structuring an arrangement that supports regional local government associations to participate in drought prepared opportunities, but not at the expense of the councils operational and regional priorities that support the sustainability of local government. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In line with item 3 and 12 – this action is underway.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5 February 2026</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Action(s)</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 23                     | <b>Feedback to LGA</b><br>The MRLGA Ceo to provide feedback to the LGA about the process for advocacy in the lead up to future (State and Federal) Elections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |
| 24                     | <b>Reinstatement of SAROC Reps</b><br>The MRLGA Board support SAROC representatives to attend meetings at times when items are pertinent to regional priorities. It supports the MRLGA Ceo, President and SAROC Representatives to continue dialogue with the LGA Ceo and President to advocate for improved engagement and advocacy frameworks with all Councils.                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed<br/>MRLGA (President, Ceo and Saroc Rep) met with LGA (President, Ceo and SAROC Chair) on 25 March accordingly.</li> </ul> |
| 25                     | <b>Call for there to be a SA Commissioner for Agriculture</b><br>The MRLGA Board, support (in-principle) the LCLGA proposal to investigate a Commissioner for Agriculture in South Australia, amidst growing challenges facing the regional and rural areas and the need for an expert, independent role to act in the best interest of South Australian Agriculture. Further support would be subject to the scope, powers and functions of the role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |
| 26                     | <b>States withdrawal to prepare a Digital Connectivity Plan</b><br>The MRLGA support the MRLGA Ceo to refer the regional digital connectivity matter to relevant state and federal members                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temporarily on hold while the SA State Election was underway.</li> <li>- Item will be delivered in May.</li> </ul>                   |
| 27                     | <b>Audit Committee Exemption</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the continuation of the exemption for MRLGA from having a risk and audit committee, given the subsidiary is externally and independently audited each year to the same standard as Councils.                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requests were sent to Councils in February. To date we have received 7 endorsements and are waiting on the 8<sup>th</sup></li> </ul> |
| 28                     | <b>Storage of Records</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the Ceo to release an EOI to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not yet started.<br/>To commence in May.</li> </ul>                                                                                  |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | (constituent) Councils who can perform records management services to scan all documents and register them in Sharepoint, as well as organise all documents pre-1980 in categories for MRLGA Ceo and President to determine their value for long term archival and report back to the Board (before any permanent documents are destroyed). If a Council is unable to deliver the service, the MRLGA will seek an external provider. |  |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

**Motion**

*"That the MRLGA Board note the actions completed and those underway from the previous meetings.*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

## 5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

### 5.1 ALGA

- **Current Policy Work**
  - Local Government Financial Sustainability
  - Emergency Management
  - Housing and Planning
  - Roads & Infrastructure
  - Closing the gap
  - Jobs and Skills
  - Environment
  - Cyber Security
  - Climate Change
  - Intergovernmental relations
- **How 'we' represent local government**

ALGA represents and advocates for local government by participating in the following Ministerial Councils and Forums:

  - National Cabinet (once per year)
  - Council on Federal Financial Relations (once per year)
  - Local Government Ministers' Forum
  - Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting
  - National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting
  - Joint Council on Closing the Gap
  - Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council
  - Environment Ministers' Meeting
  - Building Ministers' Meeting
  - Water Ministers' Meeting
  - Planning Ministers' Meeting
  - Cultural Ministers' Meeting
  - Food Ministers' Meeting
  - Ministerial Migration Roundtable
- **Advocacy, Events & News**
  - o **ALGA President Updates**

[President's Update – April 2026 – ALGA](#)  
[President's Update – February 2026 – ALGA](#)  
[President's Update – 13 January 2026 – ALGA](#)
  - o **National General Assembly (Canberra) 23 to 25 June 2026**

*"Stronger Together : Resilient. Productive. United."*

A link to the Discussion Paper : [NGA Discussion Paper](#)  
A link to the Program: [2026 NGA Program](#)  
Motions closed 27 February 2026.
  - o **National Roads Congress (Cairns) Late August tbc 2026**
  - o **Online Webinars**

|          |                                                                                            |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 April | AI for Personal Productivity in Local Government: Getting More Done Without Working Longer |
| 9 April  | Disability Inclusion Series no. 2: Safety, Justice, Gender Equality & Emergency Management |
| 25 March | Environmental law reforms Q&A: EPBC Act                                                    |
| 26 March | Disability Inclusion Series no. 1: Education, Employment and Community Attitudes           |

- **Submissions to:**
  - Productivity in Australia
  - Australian Tyre Industry
  - 2026-27 Australian Budget
  - Draft National Environmental Standards: Matters of National Environmental Significance and Offset Costs
  - Draft public guidance for the Future Made in Australia Community Benefit Principles
  - Productivity Commission Inquiry into Heavy Vehicle Reform
  - Reducing Default Speed Limits on Roads

- **Fuel supply pressures highlight critical role of local government – ALGA**

- **ALGA calls for urgent action on National Packaging Reform – ALGA**  
Each year, Australia uses over 1.3 million tonnes of plastic packaging, but more than 1 million tonnes ends up in landfill or as litter. The new report from the Australian Council of Recycling and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, *Securing Australia's Plastic Recycling Future*, presents a sobering picture of an industry in danger of collapse without urgent reform

- **ALGA welcomes the national solar panel recycling pilot – ALGA**  
The Government will invest \$24.7 million over three years, including establishing up to 100 pilot collection sites nationwide, to divert end-of-life solar panels from landfill.

**Note:** MRLGA has a line of inquiry to understand if it can be a pilot area for this program. It will report back to the Board if/when information arises.

- **Reinstatement of the national inquiry into local government sustainability – ALGA**

ALGA President Mayor Matt Burnett said: *“Reinstatement of the inquiry is a welcome first step in addressing financial sustainability – we simply can’t afford to wait any longer.”*

**Inquiry No 1.**

A total of 287 submissions from across Australia were made to this Inquiry. MRLGA, MMC, SMD, CDC, DCLW all lodged submissions to the inquiry in May 2024.

**Inquiry No. 2**

A total of 239 submissions from across Australia were made to this Inquiry. Three hearings were held in Feb/March 2026 in Canberra.

A link to the current inquiry is:

[Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability – Parliament of Australia](#)

**Chair of the Committee**, [Mrs Fiona Phillips](#), said ‘*the Committee will be considering whether existing funding mechanisms are addressing the evolving responsibilities of local governments and identify how funding arrangements affect local government’s ability to deliver services and invest in local infrastructure*’.

**Motion**

*“The MRLGA Ceo prepare a letter for signing by the President to LGA asking if it would invite the Chair of the Committee, Mrs Fiona Phillips to an online webinar after the committee has finalised the inquiry to discuss the findings and be open to queries.”*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

- **Council voices heard in Government's \$5 million response to Rex shutdown – ALGA**
- **ALGA welcomes the passage of EPBC Act reforms – ALGA**  
Reforms to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act will enable regional and strategic planning, helping to deliver national priorities like housing and renewables.
- **ALGA welcomes the National Climate Change Partnership – ALGA**  
Energy and Climate Ministers today endorsed the first National Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) which sets out how governments will work together to address emissions and climate impacts. The NCCP recognises partnership with local government as critical in achieving national climate goals, stating that local government contributions to climate action are nationally significant.
- **Webinar : National Rural Health Alliance**

"The Forgotten Spend – Health Care Report"

The Forgotten Health Spend report – National Rural Health Alliance

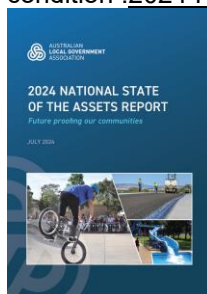
Susanne Tegen, Ceo for National Rural health Alliance is steering strong advocacy to Federal and State Governments to acknowledge the findings of underspend in rural areas and recorrect the inequality before the rising gap grows even more. The webinar was a platform for them to receive data that Councils are collecting when they need to 'fill' the void as part of advocating for the re-correction of funds.

Figure 1 | Summary of expenditure gap between urban and non-urban populations



#### OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS

- **2024 National State of the Assets Report – ALGA**  
In 2024, the report estimated \$8.3 billion of local government buildings and facilities and \$2.9 billion of parks and recreation assets to be in poor condition :2024 National State of the Assets report.



#### **Motion**

*"The MRLGA Ceo will write to ALGA to seek advice if/when a 2025 National State of the Assets Report will be released to support ongoing advocacy."*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

## 5.2 LGA of SA

### ○ Topical Update

March 2026 update is below:

[ECM\\_808925\\_v218\\_LGA\\_Update\\_Report\\_-\\_Bimonthly\\_2026](#)

### ○ LGA Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan 2025 -2030 is below.

[LGA\\_StrategicPlan.pdf](#)

### ○ LGA Road Advocacy

LGA has had successful advocacy with Federal MPs, Senators, Ministers since the end 2025. It is continuing this in the lead up to the federal budget in May.

A risk to achieving the funding may be the current global situation and federal fuel response planning. However, with the opening up of transport networks, fuel excise relief and heavy vehicle charges rolling back (for 3 months), the impost to the road network is still at the forefront and again demonstrates the need for this funding to be secured and increased.

LGA update on this item from March is below:

[SA councils warn Canberra: local roads at risk without urgent funding boost | LGA South Australia](#)

LGA update on this item from November is below:

[Update on Supplementary Local Road Funding program | LGA South Australia](#)

#### **Motion**

*"The MRLGA Ceo prepare a letter for signing by the President to Ministers King and McBain (cc LGA and SA Grants Commission) outlining strong support of the LGA's supplementary road funding advocacy and that the need is critical."*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

### ○ LGA Board Meetings

A copy of the Board Agenda from 26 March 2026 - Victor Harbour is below :

[LGA South Australia](#)

Minutes from the 26 March 2026 meeting is below:

[ECM\\_866035\\_v4\\_LGA\\_Board\\_of\\_Directors\\_Meeting\\_-\\_Public\\_Minutes\\_-\\_26\\_March\\_2026](#)

### ○ Local Government Ministers Forum

Last Meetings:

|      |               |           |
|------|---------------|-----------|
| 2024 | November      | Melbourne |
| 2025 | April         | Online    |
| 2025 | November (28) | Online    |

A link to the November communique is below:

[Joint Communiqué: Local Government Ministerial Forum #15 28 November 2025](#)

- Examining Financial Sustainability
- Accounting for Asset Depreciation
- Disaster Preparedness and Response

○ **LGA Events**

2026 events hosted by LGA:

| Month                | Event                                                                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 15           | Webinar : Future council rates levied on electricity generators             |
| February 2           | Webinar : People at increased risk in emergencies (PalRE) - online workshop |
| February 5           | GISA Multi-Unit Development Workshop                                        |
| February 17          | Webinar : LGFSF Council Emergency management arrangements                   |
| February 27          | Webinar : LGA President to provide Ombudsman SA briefing                    |
| March to April       | Coastal Resilience – Short Course                                           |
| 1 April              | Fuel Supply Update                                                          |
| TBC - May            | Drought Update                                                              |
| May 28 + 29          | LGA OGM                                                                     |
| 23 June              | Meet with Federal MP's at ALGA                                              |
| Register to Enrol    | Mandatory training for Council Elections                                    |
| September 2 - 4      | Road & works Conference                                                     |
| November (early-mid) | Local Government Elections                                                  |
| November 19 - 20     | LGA AGM                                                                     |

### 5.3 SAROC

#### Meetings, Agenda and Minutes

Meetings are scheduled for:

|            |      |                                                          |
|------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 May     | 2026 | Adelaide                                                 |
| 23 July    | 2026 | Adelaide                                                 |
| 1 October  | 2026 | Adelaide                                                 |
|            |      | <i>Local Government Elections (and Caretaker Period)</i> |
| 3 December | 2026 | Adelaide                                                 |

**March Agenda** – a link to the agenda is below:

[SAROC-Committee-Meeting-Public-Agenda-26-March-2026.pdf](#)

**March Minutes** – a link to the minutes is below:

[ECM 866143 v4 SAROC Committee Meeting - Draft Public Minutes - 26 March 2026](#)

#### Governance update

Mayor Simone Bailey has returned from leave. As one of the region's SAROC representatives, the position was vacant during that time. She has now resumed responsibilities as SAROC Representative.

#### SAROC Representatives Update

SAROC regional representative Mayor Caroline Phillips can :

- provide a report from the March 2026 SAROC Meeting
- provide an update on MRLGA's meeting with LGA President, Ceo and SAROC Chair (from 25 March) following the October motion.

**Note:** MRLGA sent a letter to LGA on 20 March 2026 regarding ESCOSA Round 2. Discuss with Saroc Representatives if follow up via Saroc is appropriate.

#### OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS

○ **DROUGHT INFORMATION**

#### State Government Support Package

A link to PIRSA's drought support initiatives is below:

<https://pir.sa.gov.au/regions-and-support/drought/drought-support>

## SA Drought Loan Scheme is open

|           |                                                                                                                           |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key Dates | Applications close on 31 December 2026 or when all funding has been allocated.                                            |
| Amounts   | Loans of up to \$250,000 are available with a loan term of up to 10 years. Total funding for the scheme is \$200 million. |

A link to more information can be found on the weblink below:

<https://pir.sa.gov.au/regions-and-support/apply-for-funding/south-australia-drought-loan-scheme>

## Advocacy

### Council rate deferral scheme

*Led by LGA*

LGA advocated for a Council Rate Deferral Scheme. The State Government advised in late October 2025 it would not fund the Scheme.

LGA hosted a webinar on 12 December 2025 to share updates and seek input on future advocacy.

LGA has proposed a drought webinar in May. A date is yet to be confirmed.

### SA Drought Advisory Group Meeting

*Led by PIRSA*

Local Government representatives are

- Mayor Bill Gebhardt (Goyder Shire Council)
- Mayor Paul Simmons (Coorong District Council) – Listed as a standing apology

Appointed by the Minister

- Mayor Stephen McCarthy (DC of Mount Remarkable)

Leanne Schmidt (LGA) was attending the SA Drought Advisory Group meetings while Mayor Simmons is an apology. Ms Schmidt has since been redeployed and there is no LGA Staff on the advisory group at this time.

### Extreme sand drift

*Led by Councils and MRLGA*

MRLGA:

- has collected sites of extreme sand drift (predominantly occurring in DCKEM and DCLW) as well as photos, volumes and data from Councils
- held a Regional Transport Committee meeting with Council Representatives and Landscape Board representatives to discuss options and next steps
- is liaising with the SA Drought Commissioner and seeking a joint field trip and funding support for Councils (who are undertaking reactive road maintenance).
- secured funding to formally map the locations of extreme sand-drift across the region and identify solutions that could reduce the need for Council intervention and maintenance.

## Grant Information

LGA is liaising with PIRSA to obtain information on the geographical disbursement of grant funding (to see when and where funding resulted). This was an action item from the online Webinar on 12 December 2025.

## RBS March Update

MRLGA will circulate a copy of the RBS Report for your information on the day.

### **Board Direction:**

In light of the Drought Loan Scheme being introduced, does the Board seek drought as an ongoing agenda item or have it removed going forward?

## OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS

### ○ FUEL SUPPLY

Information from the Australian and South Australian Government on fuel security can be read at : [Home - SA Fuel Security](#)

#### **What the Australian Government is doing**

The Australian Government is:

- temporarily lowering national taxes on fuel
- increasing the availability of supplies by changing laws and regulations
- making sure that service stations and the oil sector are acting in customers' interests
- planning ahead so that if the situation becomes more difficult the nation is prepared.

#### **What the Government of South Australia is doing**

The Government of South Australia is helping by:

- monitoring and reporting [fuel station supplies](#) through a partnership with the RAA
- working with business and industry groups to identify economic impacts on fuel-exposed sectors
- implementing regulatory reforms to improve the efficiency of freight, such as recent reforms to heavy freight regulations allowing trucks to carry larger payloads per trip.
- [Fast-tracked freight reform to reduce fuel costs | Premier of South Australia](#)

#### **Fuel Surcharge Requests**

Councils across Australia have been receiving fuel surcharge requests from contractors. This has occurred on the (joint) Waste Services Contract across the region and MRLGA has been facilitating cross council conversations with Contract Representatives to analyze the rates and proposal and respond to the Contractor uniformly. This support to Councils is part of the (opt-in) levy established to provide Contract Administration support to Councils and leads into the next item.

#### **Increase costs to deliver essential services (ie Waste Services) + NSW Advocacy**

Following advocacy in NSW (link below) whereby Councils are asking its State Government to use the waste levy to support regional council waste services amid fuel rate increases. The MLRGA forwarded a copy of this proposal to the LGA on 2 April 2026 to inquire if it had developed any preliminary talking points around limiting the price impacts to regional Councils delivering essential services for community.

[NSW Mayors mobilise to ensure waste collection continuity amid fuel crisis - Inside Local Government](#)

#### **Australian Government Treasurer Forecast**

*Treasurer Jim Chalmers has warned the global economy is facing a "very serious and dangerous time" with the International Monetary Fund this week predicting that a prolonged conflict in the Middle East could trigger a global recession.*

*In a recent press conference, Chalmers said while Australia was better placed than many countries to deal with the impacts of the conflict, it would "not be spared from the fallout of this very substantial economic shock".*

*"Even when the strait is properly reopened, and even when the hostilities formally end in an enduring way, we still expect the consequences of this war in the Middle East to be felt for some time," he said.*

*"We are expecting in our own economy, in our own forecasts, for our economy to slow, and we are expecting inflation to be higher as a consequence of this war in the Middle East."*

*Chalmers said the budget would strike the right balance between "near-term pressures and intergenerational obligations".*

*"I'm confident that this budget, which will be focused on fuel security, supply chain resilience and economic reform, will balance those key considerations."*

Australia 'won't be spared' from economic shock of Middle East war, says Treasurer | Accounting Times

### **Timing**

In light of (part) of the Federal Budget focusing on fuel security, supply chain resilience and economic reform, now is a good time to plan and advocate for initiatives that support our supply chain resilience (linked to Item 9.2).

#### **Board Direction:**

Would the Board be interested in an online presentation on Energy from Waste technologies, including an overview of the various energy products that can be derived from selected waste streams and its potential role towards Green Urea, Synthetic Fuels, AdBlue and others?

MRLGA Ceo believes a presentation would provide valuable shared insight into emerging opportunities and how its regional waste management network could assess and strengthen supply chain resilience, particularly as these initiatives are, and will be, a focus for State and Federal Governments.

### **Preparedness**

Councils are likely considering business continuity plans should Level 3 Restrictions emerge and where appropriate making allowances in draft Annual Budgets for inflation and slowed growth. A link to the National Fuel Security Plan and Levels can be read here : [National Fuel Security Plan | PM&C](#)

#### **Board Direction:**

Would the Board like MRLGA to facilitate any cross-council preparedness discussions with the CEO Network to consider what service adjustments each council may implement should Level 3 restrictions emerge or be introduced?

### ○ **LGA BOARD NOMINATIONS INTERFACING WITH ELECTIONS**

The term for current LGA Board and SAROC Members will end November 2026.

Local Government Elections will be held in November 2026 and the appointment of new LGA Board and SAROC representatives will be advised by the LGA.

#### **Board Direction:**

Would the Board like to consider any planning towards having the region represented on the LGA Board and/or Saroc for 2026-2030?

## 6 REGION WIDE AGENCY UPDATES

Due to a late call out for regional reports, less reports are in this quarter. Reports from region-wide organisations, partners and stakeholders are below:

### 6.1 Zone Emergency Management Committee (ZEMC)

The last ZEMC meeting was held online on 11 February 2026. Some of the meeting highlights are listed below.

- **New SAFECOM Ceo** Ms Hannah Wandel OAM, commenced
- **Disaster Ready Fund** (R3 / \$200M) 7 SA Projects supported ([DRF Projects](#))
- **Regional Capability Community Fund (RCCF)** has been established to improve community safety and capability to respond to fire emergencies. Round 4 applications closed on 8 August 2025, offering reimbursements between \$300 and \$5,000 to farmers and farming businesses to purchase equipment to support the safe use of Farm Fire Units (FFUs). Additionally, in Round 4 the fund reimbursed approved water tank purchases or a portion of a purchase up to \$10,000 allowing for the purchase of a minimum 22,000L tank, fire fittings, and other firefighting items to support preparedness and resilience in key areas. In total, funding in this round provided for the purchase of 150 pieces of equipment, including 53 FFUs and 21 community firefighting water tanks.
- **30Days30WaysAUS campaign** for 2025 achieved strong engagement, reaching more than 100,000 viewers through 100 per cent organic distribution, an increase of 65,000 views compared with the 2024 campaign. It delivered 30 videos in 30 days, producing around 40 minutes of video content and 80 minutes of radio broadcast focused on lived experience and practical emergency preparedness. [30Days30WaysAUS | 30Days30WaysAUS](#)
- **A (non funded) Recovery Role** on ZEMC is proposed by DPC. Further details to be provided by ZEMC Chair or SES Representative.

#### **Board Direction:**

Would the Board like to understand more about how additional recovery responsibilities are being proposed by DPC at ZEMC for the region?

### 6.2 Murray Darling Association

#### **Next Conference**

82nd National Conference - "Working Together for our Basin Future"  
[82nd National Conference — Murray Darling Association](#)  
Greater Shepparton City Council, VIC  
24 – 27 August 2026

#### **Strategic Plan**

A link to the 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan is : [Strategic Plan 2025-30](#)

#### **Region 5**

Region 5 Chair is Cr Margaret Howie (Renmark Paringa Council)  
A copy of the last meeting minutes will be provided on the day.

#### **Region 6**

Region 6 Chair is Cr Millie Livingston (Alexandrina Council)  
A copy of the last meeting minutes will be provided on the day.

#### **MDB Plan Submissions**

Region 5 and Region 6 are preparing written submissions to the MDA Plan consultation process and MRLGA Ceo is liaising with them in the background.

### 6.3 SA Drought Hub

The February 2026 newsletter can be found below:

[SA Drought Hub Update – February 2026](#)

The hub began engagement webinars late last year (50mins):

Friday 27 March 2026

- [Regional Engagement Update: A webinar for SA Drought Hub Members and Network Partners - SA Drought Hub](#)

November 2025

- [Regional Engagement webinar for SA Drought Hub partners \(Nov 2025\) - SA Drought Hub](#)

### 6.4 One Basin CRC (Loxton)

The Regional Hub Loxton Ceo role remains vacant and is being performed by Chief Operating Officer, Avril Hogan.

Its current projects are listed below and can be found at [Projects - One Basin CRC](#) :

- Policy and Regulatory Aspects of Water Banking in the Murray Darling Basin, Australia and California (USA)
- Truth telling in Agriculture
- Future Basin Economies: Innovative Approaches to Design and Deliver Economic Investments Wanted by Basin Communities
- Decarbonising the Bains's irrigation regions
- Cyanobacteria toxin uptake in food crops and implications to humans
- Geospatial modelling of region-scale crop water use to forecast climate change
- Incentivising and investing in climate adaptation and the adoption of sustainable basin management practices
- Water banking for enhance drought resilience
- Predicting the impact of climate change on irrigation demand across One Basin
- Opportunities and challenges identifying, sourcing and treating brackish groundwater

### 6.5 PIRSA

**Note:** PIRSA has advised that the Murraylands & Riverland Regional Principal Regional Advisor, Barb Cowey is currently engaged in a range of other priority projects across the agency. Accordingly, for matters relating to the Riverland and Murraylands, the following PIRSA contacts are advised to be used in the interim:

- Jennifer Schilling, Acting General Manager, Regions – for ongoing matters previously supported or overseen by the Principal Regional Advisor.
- Rachael Kelly, Manager, Drought and Resilience – for matters relating to the Sustainable Communities Program.
- Geoff Cowey, Senior Industry Advisor – for grape and wine-related matters.

### 6.6 SAPOL

Officer in Charge: Cynthia Healey.

**Supt Cindy Healey**

Officer in Charge

Murray Mallee Region

South Australia Police

58 Swanport Rd, Murray Bridge

T 08 853 56076 M 0410466384

E [Cynthia.Healey@police.sa.gov.au](mailto:Cynthia.Healey@police.sa.gov.au)

W [www.police.sa.gov.au](http://www.police.sa.gov.au)

Encouraged to follow its Facebook page for live updates and initiatives:  
<https://www.facebook.com/SouthAustraliaPolice/>

## 6.7 Country SAPHN

A link to the April 2026 Newsletter is below:  
[April 2026 Volume 12 Issue 3 - Country SA PHN](#)

An extract from the April 2026 Newsletter:

- On the 17 March, Country SAPHN Reps travelled to Berri to join the Riverland Community Services Alliance where, amongst the other Country SA PHN updates, shared the great work happening with two local Rural Health Innovation Fund recipients:
  - o Ramble Arts' 3<sup>rd</sup> Place youth space at Waikerie and
  - o Women Together Learning (WoTL), who are having a new Riverland intake for their program in April.

## 6.8 SA Cross Border Commissioner

### Victorian and South Australia CEO Forum

Victorian & South Australian Cross Border Commissioners decided to postpone the upcoming Local Government Vic | SA Forum scheduled for the Thursday 7 & Friday 8 May 2026 in Naracoorte and instead has been altered to:

- a) A short online session on Friday 8 May 2026 and
- b) A revised date of Thursday 13 and Friday 14 August 2026 as the new dates for the forum in Naracoorte

## 6.9 Country Arts

News :

- [Riverland artists invited to exhibit at Chaffey Theatre - Country Arts](#)
- [Country Arts SA brings home fundraising gold - Country Arts](#)
- [Apply now for Intersection 2026 - Country Arts](#)
- [Submissions open for 2027 Breaking Ground Award - Country Arts](#)

### OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS

#### **Motion**

*"That the MRLGA Board note and accept the regional stakeholders written reports and/or minutes shared."*

Moved,

Seconded

## 7 STATE NEWS & STRATEGY'S

An overview of State Government strategy's, plans or news are provided below for information:

### 7.1 State Government Elections

The SA State Government elections went to the polls on 21 March 2026. The current Ministers are as stated: [The team | Premier of South Australia](#)

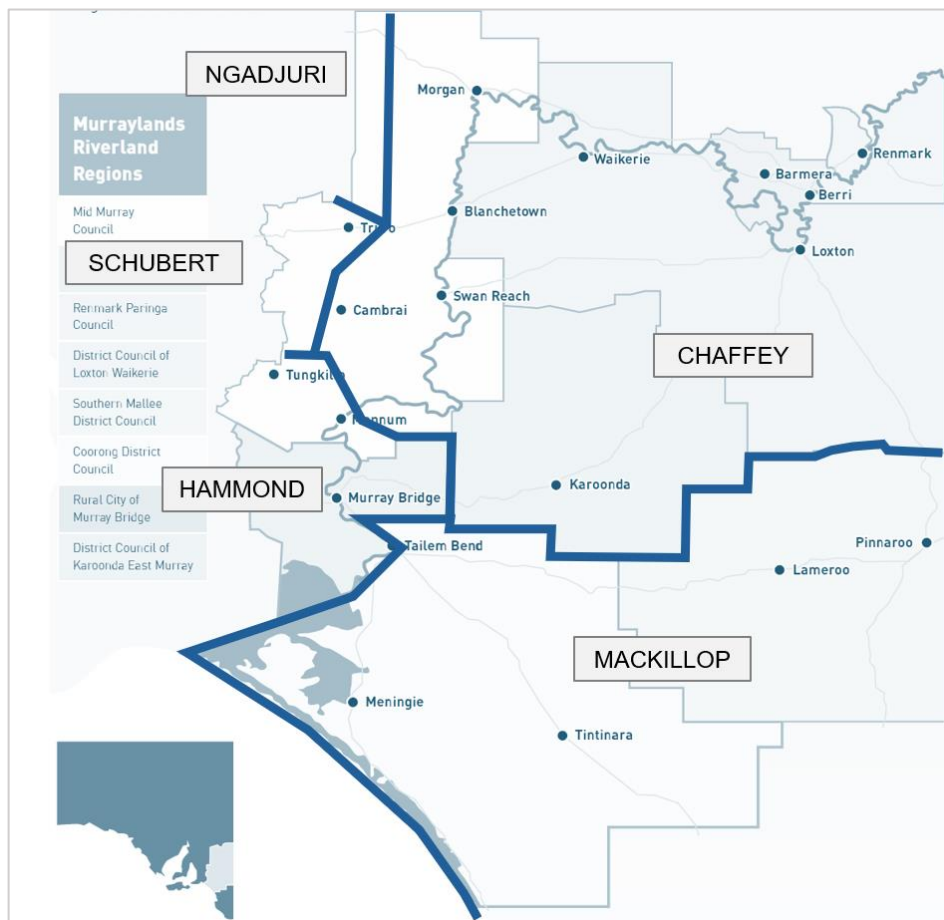
#### New Local Government Minister

Following the 2026 SA State Elections a new Minister for Local Government has been appointed, Rhiannon Pearce MP [Rhiannon Pearce MP | Premier of South Australia](#)  
She is the :

- Minister for Emergency Services
- Minister for Local Government
- Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing
- Member for King

#### State Members

- |                        |                       |                                |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| - Member for Chaffey   | Tim Whetsone (LIB)    | <a href="#">Tim Whetstone</a>  |
| - Member for Hammond   | Robert Roylance (ONP) | <a href="#">Link</a>           |
| - Member for Mackillop | Jason Virgo (ONP)     | <a href="#">Link</a>           |
| - Member for Ngadjuri  | David Paton (ONP)     | <a href="#">Link</a>           |
| - Member for Schubert  | Ashton Hurn (LIB)     | <a href="#">Ashton Hurn MP</a> |



\* Shared boundaries are approximate only.

### 7.2 The Government confirmed the parliamentary sitting calendar 2026 [Getting on with business | Premier of South Australia](#)

The Opening of the 56th Parliament will take place on Tuesday, 5 May, marking the formal commencement of the new parliamentary term and the beginning of an ambitious legislative agenda.

### **7.3 Community Cabinet – Murray Bridge - Thursday 5 February**

State Government Ministers visited Murray Bridge on Thursday 5 February and hosted a community event in conjunction with announcing a \$100m package SA Labor – Labor's Plan for Murray Bridge towards:

- MetroCARD in Murray Bridge
- New Maternity Ward and Birthing Unit
- New Renal Unit
- New Permanent Ambulance Crew
- New Technical College
- New Police Station
- New Classrooms

### **7.4 State & Local Government - Economic Partnership Accord**

In November 2025 an Accord was signed (link below) outlining a proposed Local Government Co-Ordinator. An extract from the Accord is :

- o A Local Government Coordinator will be nominated within the Coordinator General's Office (CGO) to, in accordance with the *State Development Coordination and Facilitation Act 2025*:
  - Promote the opportunity for councils and local government bodies to submit initiatives to be considered as a Priority Project.
  - Develop guidelines for the identification and project management of local government initiatives declared as Priority Projects.
  - Receive and consider project and initiative proposals from councils and advise the CGO or the Minister on their designation as a Priority Project.
  - Facilitate engagement and coordinate resources within State Government organisations to accelerate the development and implementation of Priority Projects.
  - Develop, in collaboration with the LGA, a biannual report to the Premier and the Minister for Local Government on local government initiatives that have been progressed through the CGO.

[FINAL-State Local-Government-Economic-Partnership-Accord-SIGNED-13.11.20252.pdf](#)

LGA announced the signing during the Nov '25 AGM and published news on 16 January 2026: [New Accord formalises State and Local Government as economic partners | LGA South Australia](#)

### **7.5 Gather Round – Spin Offs**

#### **Health Check Promotion**

“Footy fans urged to get free health checks at AFL Gather Round”  
[Footy fans urged to get free health checks at AFL Gather Round | Premier of South Australia](#)

#### **Government hosting more than 120 interstate investors looking for business opportunities in SA**

“Gather Round is much more than a footy festival, with the Malinauskas Labor Government hosting more than 120 interstate investors looking for business opportunities in SA.”  
[Investors gather for business opportunities | Premier of South Australia](#)

## **7.6 State Waste Strategy**

The State released its strategy (2025 - 2030) on 11 December 2025:

[Accelerating SA's transition to a circular economy: South Australia's waste strategy 2025–2030](#)

## **7.7 State Public Health Plan**

Public Consultation closed 21 November 2025.

[State Public Health Plan | SA Health](#)

The final release date is tbc.

## **7.1 State 30 Year Public Transport Strategy**

Consultation on the Draft Strategy closed 27 June 2025

[Future of Public Transport - Department for Infrastructure and Transport - South Australia](#)

The final release date is tbc.

## **7.2 Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan**

Country SA PHN and the Department for Health and Wellbeing (SA Health) are working together to develop a Joint Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2026 – 2029 (Joint Regional Plan) for country South Australia.

Consultation closed 4 July 2025.

[Joint Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2026 – 2029 | YourSAy](#)

The final release date is tbc.

## **7.3 Council Rates, Electricity Generator Bill**

The bill was introduced by Hon. Frank Pangallo, and seeks to change how large electricity generators are rated for council rates in SA. It would address a long-standing anomaly under the Electricity Corporation Rates Deregulation (ECRD) Act that has effectively given some electricity generation assets a reduced or exempt rating status for about 25 years, which councils and the Local Government Association argue costs local government millions annually. Because it is not a government bill, its progress depends heavily on:

- Cross-bench support
- Government willingness to adopt or amend the proposal

As of the latest Hansard record (April 2025), it remains in progress, not yet enacted.

[Statutes Amendment \(Rates—Electricity Generation\) Bill 2025 | South Australian Legislation](#)

**OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS**

## 8 FEDERAL NEWS & STRATEGY'S

### FOR INFORMATION

#### 8.1 Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development, Communication , Sport and the Arts

A list of the Federal Minsters with the Department is below:  
Ministers for the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **More than 280 road safety upgrades coming:**

42 new road safety projects announced | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **Strengthening online safety for Australians**

Strengthening online safety for Australians | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **New National Fuel Security advertising campaign**

New National Fuel Security advertising campaign launches | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **Fuel excise and Heavy vehicle Road User Charge relief for Australian drivers**

Fuel excise and Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge relief for Australian drivers | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **New factsheet on EME exposure limits now available**

New factsheet on EME exposure limits now available | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- **2026 National Local Government Awards open for entries**

2026 National Awards for Local Government open for entries | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts  
Nominations closed Monday 6 April 2026.

- **Australia's 2035 emission reduction target (62-70%)**

To help drive the transition to net zero, the Australian Government has set a target to reduce emissions to 62-70% below 2005 levels by 2035.  
Net Zero - DCCEEW

They have also developed 6 Sector Plans. One sector is: Agriculture & Land. A link to the plan is below as an example:  
Agriculture and Land Sector Plan - DAFF

- **For a link to other consultation items, please visit:**

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

### OPEN FOR DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS

## 9 MRLGA : Quarterly reflections and/or current and emerging items

The following items have been extracted from the Annual Business Plan for highlights, awareness, endorsement or discussion as part of progressing its identified initiatives.

### 9.1 Regional Public Health & Wellbeing

#### Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plan – (Stage 1) Review commencing soon

##### Background

Section 51(19) of Public Health Act 2011 requires Regional Public Health (& Wellbeing) Plans be reviewed every 5 years. Pursuant to this legislative requirement, MRLGA has developed a framework with the Committee to review the current regional plan. Centralising this work at MRLGA alleviates Councils from performing this work individually and (ie 8 times) and rather perform the review once at a region scale and determine updates.

A project plan is under development that will identify key milestone dates for the Committee to inform steps in the process.

##### Advocacy for funding

Regional councils may consider seeking State Government funding support to undertake the review and update of regional public health plans, as this represents an additional statutory responsibility that requires significant staff time, expertise, consultation and financial resources. Not all Australian States place this obligation on local government, highlighting that South Australian councils are carrying extra responsibilities that are increasingly being funded through local rates. In light of the recent ESCOSA findings regarding council financial sustainability, there is a stronger case than ever to advocate to the State for direct support to ensure these responsibilities are properly resourced rather than shifted to ratepayers. There is also a timely opportunity to pursue this now while the State Public Health Plan remains in draft form, and before councils are required to finalise the next round of regional health plans. An example of other States providing funding support is provided below:

WA Govt funding for council public health plans - Inside Local Government

##### **Motion**

*"The MRLGA Ceo prepare a letter for signing by the President to the LGA outlining the valid reasons why regional councils should be provided with an appropriate level of funding and support to deliver regional public health plan reviews and updates."*

Moved,

Seconded

### 9.2 Regional Waste Management & Resource Recovery

#### Strategy - A Move Towards Strategic Partnerships & Shared Planning

##### Background

In late December 2025 Green Industries SA (GISA) released its State Waste Strategy [State Strategy](#) outlining targets towards net zero, circularity rates, waste management, landfill diversion and more. Key points from the strategy as it applies to regional local government include:

- Six new regional plans are being developed for Kangaroo Island, Yorke Peninsula and Mid North, Eyre and Western, Far North, Limestone Coast, and Murray Mallee. These plans will guide land use and infrastructure priorities to support sustainable growth over the next 15–30 years.
- Regional councils are expected to meet and progressively improve the targets and outcomes set within their waste management plans and strategies.
- All metropolitan Adelaide councils provide kerbside FOGO services, while many regional councils are introducing services where practical. There remains strong potential to further increase household food waste diversion and improve material quality.
- Regional councils face shared waste challenges, but varying local circumstances

mean one-size-fits-all solutions are not suitable. Place-based investment in organics processing, transfer stations and recovery facilities can improve efficiency and outcomes.

- Developing regional end markets for recovered materials can strengthen the long-term viability of local resource recovery solutions.
- Regional circular economy roadmaps, developed through collaboration across government, industry, universities and communities, can identify opportunities, attract investment and create local jobs.

### Proposal

MRLGA Ceo has met with Green Industries Ceo to discuss circular economy opportunities in the region. Currently the Murraylands and Riverland region contributes approximately \$750,000 - \$800,000 through the State Waste Levy and little of this money makes its way back into the region to support the system. As a method to reduce the number of duplicatory plans, enhance the regions chances for more co-ordination and build foundations for strategic partnerships, its proposed that MRLGA liaises with GISA and RDAMR to work towards one update of the Circular Economy Strategy - that encompasses the targets regional local government need to meet in the State Strategy.

The infographic below shows the documents associated with 2020-2025 and provides two scenarios as we move to 2025-2030, proposing three documents are amalgamated into one under a partnership model, and funded through a grant program and continue the Circular Economy model.



### Motion

*"The MRLGA Ceo undertake liaison with GISA and appropriate stakeholders to ascertain interest from partners for a joint approach to a single strategy, pursuant to the conditions outlined in Item 9.2 of the Agenda and report back to the board before next steps."*

Moved,

Seconded

### Shared Services Pilot (via 2 Waste Levy's)

#### Background

The Regional Waste & Resource Recovery Strategy and Implementation Plan was/is visionary in its approach but lacked funding and resourcing to deliver initiatives. As a bridge to this gap, the MRLGA consulted with Councils on a proposal to undertake a shared service model, hosted through the subsidiary's platform. Feedback was positive and it translated into two waste levy's (for 5 Councils linked to a joint Waste Services Contract – BBC, DCLW, RPC, RCMB and CDC) :

- 1) Contract Administration Support and
- 2) Waste Education Support.

The roles were filled in September and October 2024. During this time significant uplift has happened in terms of output and outcomes that were detailed in a memo to operating staff in March 2026 and to support discussions towards a new model that can function

with more benefits.

The pilot for these shared services resulted in valuable insights and lessons for Councils and MRLGA but is unsustainable for MRLGA, particularly given alternative models exist that may have greater chance of output, outcomes whilst allowing MRLGA to retain efficiency and equity for members whilst also leaning to its strengths.

This was a low-cost low-risk exercise for Councils as :

- 1) Contract Administration Support was \$12k p.a and
- 2) Waste Education Support was a credit back from the service contract at \$20k p.a.

#### *Update and notice to transition support to new model(s)*

As both roles became vacant under natural progression, it prompted a timely review of the initiative to measure its performance and future.

A key challenge has been the draw on the subsidiary's single resource (ie Ceo) to prop up the Levy program for shared services, which has been significant and is ultimately an unsustainable service to continue (at this time for these functions).

A notice to suspend and withdraw the levies was issued to Councils for consideration and feedback. MRLGA is facilitating in person conversations with Councils operating staff to discuss the experience and lessons learned as well as gauging demand and views on alternative service models.

The timing of the notice was brought forward so Councils could consider this as part of any draft budget process. Therefore conversations have begun to support budget processes across Councils. After MRLGA has received feedback from Council staff, it will present back to the Board.

It's likely Council's see value in having the operational support functions continue (ie. Contract Administration and Waste Education) and therefore the shared initiative is likely to continue but under a more efficient model and smaller group sizes.

For the Boards awareness, some of the alternative models that will be preliminarily discussed with Councils include a) External Service Provider b) a 'Host' Council and c) Professional Development Program. Whilst there is the option to retain a shared service for 5 Councils under one governance membership model, there is also a modified model that is smaller in management (ie 3 Riverland Councils and 2 or 3 Murraylands Councils) that will be open for consideration and input.

#### **Kerbside Review – Draft Report Complete**

A draft report has been completed and will be delivered to Council operational teams in the following sequential Stages.

Stage 1 - Riverland Councils

Stage 2 - Coorong District Council and

Stage 3 - Rural City of Murray Bridge.

This project was identified as part of the regional strategy and will provide Councils with information about:

- How much food waste and garden waste is being placed in the red lid bin
- Why landfills seek to avoid food waste and garden waste from going to landfill
- How these mechanisms influence the State Waste Levy
- Service cost projections
- Much more !

It is planned that Councils will receive the draft report through briefing(s) before it is made final.

For Councils on a 1or 2 bin system, MRLGA is liaising separately with:

- Mid Murray Council and its waste team while it does an internal review of its 1 / 2-bin system and its future options.

- District Council of Karoonda East Murray on its EPA licence and alternative options.
- SMDC and remains available for support to them while it reviewed its waste management model.

### 9.3 Regional Transport & Assets

#### Special Local Roads Program –Closed

Following the completion of a unique SLRP supplementary round in December 2025, MRLGA commenced dialogue with Councils to assess regionally significant roads that are suitable for funding in 26/27 under the SLRP emerging round. This collaborative work finished in March and the SLRP portal closed 21 April 2026.

#### Regional Transport Strategy - Update

MRLGA (in association with two Council Directors) met with Limestone Coast LGA Ceo and one of its Council Directors to discuss Road Condition Audits, Technology (including Ai), Asset Management and updates to each regions Regional Transport Plans.

There may be opportunities for efficiency and possibly a joint R&D application for regional transport plans given the timing for both regions to undertake this work is coinciding. If any shared efficiencies emerge, it will report opportunities to the Committee, Ceo Network and Board for comment and consideration.

### 9.4 Future Drought Fund - Regional Drought Resilience Program (MR Plan)

#### Background

The Future Drought Fund has entered a new 4 year chapter of funding. The table below provides an overview of the FDF programs in regards to the RDR Program.

|              | 2024 - 2028 |       |                       |       | 2028-2032 |       |       |       | FDF Investment Programs                                                         | Delivery Agent     |
|--------------|-------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
|              | 24/25       | 25/26 | 26/27                 | 27/28 | 28/29     | 29/30 | 30/31 | 31/32 |                                                                                 |                    |
| \$28,000,000 | 1           | 2     | Pending \$104,000,000 |       |           |       |       |       | Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs.                                | SA Drought Hub     |
| \$83,200,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     | 5         |       |       |       | Farm Business Resilience program<br>(incl Drought Resilience Scholarships).     |                    |
| \$67,000,000 |             | 1     | 2                     | 3     | 4         |       |       |       | Regional Drought Resilience Planning program (4 Years)                          | Regional Consortia |
| \$60,300,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     | 5         | 6     |       |       | Long-Term Trials program                                                        |                    |
| \$40,000,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     | 5         | 6     |       |       | Resilient Landscapes program                                                    |                    |
| \$37,000,000 |             | 1     | 2                     | 3     |           |       |       |       | (New) Scaling Success program                                                   |                    |
| \$36,000,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     |           |       |       |       | FDF Communities program                                                         |                    |
| \$20,000,000 |             | 1     | 2                     | 3     |           |       |       |       | Innovation Challenges Pilot                                                     |                    |
| \$17,200,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     |           |       |       |       | Climate Services for Agriculture Program<br>(and 'My Climate View').            |                    |
| \$15,000,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     |           |       |       |       | Place-based and First Nations-led activities<br>(incl \$ for FN Advisory Group) |                    |
| \$11,400,000 | 1           | 2     | 3                     | 4     |           |       |       |       | Support monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)                               |                    |

#### Updates

As part of the RDR Program, each region has received the opportunity to apply for:

- o \$140k for Implementation Plan Funding

Murraylands & Riverland applied and received this funding in 2025 and have used it to employ a central Rural Resilience Coordinator.

Arkellah Irving commenced in the role late 2025 and has commenced "Implementation Plan" work that PIRSA require as an output from the funding. The "Implementation Plan Guidelines" set by PIRSA establish a process it seeks all

'consortium's' to use as a method to prioritise future RDRP investment funding.

- \$300k for Delivery

Landscape Board MR, RDA MR and MRLGA each applied for \$100k of the delivery funding late 2025.

MRLGA was successful in receiving \$100k for the following three grant applications.

- Circular economy opportunities for dryland agriculture: Turning Crop Waste into Value - A bio-char pathway in rural areas.
- Establish a community platform in the (south) Murraylands for community led drought preparedness.
- From Risk to Resilience: Managing Sand Drift on Rural Roads  
Mapping extreme sand drift locations in rural areas (that risk road closures) and identify possible solutions

A copy of the RDA/MR and Landscape Board projects can be provided on request.

These are pilot projects before the main funding program is announced.

A draft funding agreement has been provided by PIRSA but a final version is pending (therefore no projects have commenced).

**Motion**

*"The MRLGA Board issue delegation to the Ceo to sign and execute the grant funding agreement with PIRSA (to receive approximately \$100,000 income) to deliver projects in the region under the Regional Drought Resilience Program."*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

A link to the Federal Funding Agreement for FDF / RDRP is:

[SA - RDRP Phase 2 agreement Signed 20250815.pdf](#)

|                 | 25/26   | 26/27   | 27/28   | 28/29   | Total   |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Federal Funding | \$1.7 M | \$1.8 M | \$1.6 M | \$1.5 M | \$6.8 M |
| State Funding   | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     |

There are 6 regions under the RDRP program, and under the assumption funding is dispersed equally, the future forecast would appear as:

|            | 25/26     | 26/27     | 27/28     | 28/29     | Total   |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Per Region | \$296,423 | \$310,585 | \$271,391 | \$263,762 | \$1.1 M |

Note: This excludes the State funding, as this is tbc.

## 9.5 Future Drought Fund - fRRR – Community Impact Program (\$900k in 26/27 + 27/28)

The Community Impact Program is funded by the Future Drought Fund. The Murraylands & Riverland region is one of 12 across the Country who can participate in the 2-year program (which the RDA.MR led from 2023-25 delivering four projects).

More information about the program can be read via the link below :

[FDF Communities – Community Impact Program](#)

MRLGA liaised with the Ceo Network and Public Health & Wellbeing Committee about the emerging opportunities under this program.

The fRRR and its consultant Tanya Lehmann hosted a workshop in:

- Taillem Bend on 31 April 2026 and
- Berri on 1 April 2026

MRLGA Ceo attended the Taillem Bend workshop but was unable to attend the Berri Workshop and therefore Mayor Ella Winnall attended it on her behalf as MRLGA President.

fRRR will fund a Regional Coordinator (to the value of \$150k over two years) to support the projects that are ultimately funded by the \$900k.

The organisation to 'host' the regional coordinator role is yet to be determined and will receive income for the position. Organisations can express interest now if they seek to be host.

**Board Direction:**

Would the Board like to receive a list of the opportunities and risks if MRLGA was to put forward itself as Regional Coordinator for the fRRR Community Impact Program?

## 9.6 Murray Darling Basin - Water Recovery – Round 1 SCP

### *Commonwealth Water Reform - Resilient Rivers Framework*

|                                         |        |                          |                |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Resilient Rivers Infrastructure Program | \$494m | 23/24 to 26/27 (4 Years) | NSW / VIC / SA |
| Sustainable Community's Program         | \$300m | 24/25 to 27/28 (4 Years) | NSW / VIC / SA |

### *Background*

Councils have been participating in working groups with PIRSA and regional stakeholders since April 2025 to inform a PIRSA Business Case of projects for this program.

### *Sustainable Communities Grant Program – Round 1 Closed*

The Sustainable Communities Program opened on 15 January 2026 and closed on Tuesday 31 March 2026 - [Sustainable Communities Program - PIRSA](#)

| ROUND 1  |                        | Budget | Projects |        |
|----------|------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
|          |                        | \$14 M | Min      | Max    |
| Stream 1 | Investment Feasibility | \$1 M  | \$50k    | \$275k |
| Stream 2 | Investment Ready       | \$13 M | \$50k    | -      |

The program was announced as a \$20m program.

### *MRLGA Submission – Did not proceed*

Whilst MRLGA investigated opportunities to submit an application for this funding, it identified alternative pathways to progress outcomes (ie Item 9.2) and therefore did not make a submission to this grant program (that required 30% co-contribution).

### *Round 2 – Idea gathering now*

Board Members received a copy of correspondence from MRLGA to PIRSA seeking to share that there are economic development projects in the region that have not made their way's to SCP and would they consider keeping the criteria for Round 2 open to business case and concept development projects (as opposed to delivery projects only).

PIRSA advised that whilst the Federal guidelines limit this in Round 2 they would like all proposal tabled for their awareness.

MRLGA on-shared this with Council Ceo Network and any project ideas its receives will be passed back to PIRSA.

## 9.7 Items Underway

For the Boards awareness, the following items are underway:

- 2026/27 Draft Annual Business Plan is under development and MRLGA Ceo will undertake consultation shortly.
- Ceo Performance Panel met in April and will be continuing the process in April / May followed by a report to the July meeting.
- The MRLGA Charter review is 90% complete and a draft will be circulated outside of a board meeting for review before being tabled at the July meeting.
- MRLGA Policies are 90% updated and will be circulated outside of a board meeting for review before being tabled at the July meeting.
- The subsidiary's application to the Minister for an exemption from establishing an Audit Committee has progressed, with support received from six of the eight Councils. The remaining two endorsements are expected by the end of April, after which the application will be finalised and submitted to the Minister in May.
- MRLGA Ceo has not planned to attend ALGA in June 2026.

## 10 FINANCIAL

### 10.1 Quarterly Financial Statements

Quarterly Financial Statements will be tabled on the day as [Attachment 2](#) and issued electronically as part of the meeting minutes.

#### **Motion**

*"That the MRLGA Board accept the financial statements submitted for the quarter ending 31 March 2026.*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

## 11 ROUND TABLE

### 11.1 Berri Barmera Council

Any items from Mayor Ella Winnall.

Past items included:

- RLGF: Letter from Minister for Infrastructure and Transport regarding the maintenance of a navigable channel on the River Murray.
- Update post visit with RDA Murraylands & Riverland Board on 23 October 2025.
- RLGF has issued a letter to Minister(s) if the River Murray is 'navigable' and are waiting a reply. The reply will be shared with the group.
- The background to this issue relates to obstructions in the river and responsibility.
- Office of Small and Family Business
- Asked the MRLGA Ceo inquire with Office of Small and Family Business if it would consider altering its (closed) delivery partner program to other
- Bank stabilisation learnings for Ski Club
- Asked if others have had success with bank stabilisation to pass back on to its ski club (in terms of products, design, specification or contacts). MRLGA offered to email the Infrastructure committee on their behalf and advise.

### 11.2 Coorong District Council

Any items from Acting Mayor Jonathan Pietzsch.

Past items included:

- Update on SA Water partnership at Wellington East
- Reviewing how to fund jetty upgrades
- Impacts from Drought
- Delivering "Unbreakable Farmer" sessions
- Liaising with the PHN on local issues
- CDC has reviewed its hardship policy
- Impacts of Little Corellas are ongoing and growing, including that on mental

health.

- Further work and advocacy is being led by Council in light of the withdrawal of health services, and the following challenges and impacts that ensue. 40 submissions from community have been received to support Councils advocacy

### **11.3 District Council of Loxton Waikerie**

Any items from Mayor Trevor Norton.

Past items included:

- Councils levels of support and/or facilitation of Justice of the Peace services
- Spoke to the outcome of the South Australian Boating Facility Advisory Committee (SABFAC) panel recruitment
- LGA Visit  
LGA Ceo, Clinton Jury and a bus of visitors came to DCLW to see a stormwater / cwms project of theirs.
- Changing Places Public Toilet  
Promoted a recent project of Council to build a changing places toilet facility. Stated there are only 20 in SA but that they were able to receive 50% funding to build it.

### **11.4 District Council of Karoonda East Murray**

Any items from Mayor Caroline Philips.

Past items included:

- Recent events (like Mindarie races drew 3000 people and it is having a Kick off Your Boots visit, that are all helpful for community spirit during drought).
- DCKEM is initiating a local Murraylands Drought Survey (12 months on) and invited others to express interest if they wish to undertake it in unison
- Murraylands Drought Survey - It consulted with Preventive Health about the drought survey and it was a productive conversation around community comments in public surveys. They were supportive of the survey work Council(s) had done.
- 40 Year Anniversary for Farm Fair  
Proud to have a farm fair that's been going on for so long, although they may consider scaling it back to 1 day.
- General Practitioner  
A Doctor may be coming in April.

### **11.5 Mid Murray Council**

Any items from Mayor Simone Bailey.

Past items included:

- Financial Sustainability Round Table
- River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve
- Rating pressure – a story was shared about rate rise pressures to community's and vulnerable (agricultural) areas.
- Foundation SA
- Standpipes Funding  
It is anticipating success via a strengthening industry grant program for funding associated with 14 standpipes and getting them automated.
- Regional Partnership Funding  
They hope some good news is coming soon.
- LGA OGM  
Reiterated that MMC is advocating for adjustments to the FA Grants formula and will be looking forward to the discussion at the upcoming LGA OGM.

### **11.6 Renmark Paringa Council**

Any items from Mayor Peter Hunter.

Past items included:

- RPC presented to the RDA Murraylands and Riverland Board on 23 October about its Jane Eliza development.

- It will sit on the Flood Warning Committee.
- It hosted the last SAROC meetings and LGA Board meetings in Renmark and included a local river cruise to show its recently completed wharf redevelopment and highlights other initiatives of RPC
- Cr Howie advised she is a representative on the SA Recreation and Boating Safety Committee. It has recently released its Strategy (2025-2030)  
<https://www.marinesafety.sa.gov.au/south-australia-recreational-boating-safetystrategy>
- Mayor Hunter met with the SA Mental Health Commissioner in January 2025.
- Navigation of the River will table at the next Riverland Forum for discussion.
- Awareness about limitations of Mental Health Services in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Murray, Mallee and Riverland - Local Health Network  
They are seeking an update from Wayne Champion / LHN on the status of the 30 recommendation made in the Mental Health Services review.
- Insurances  
They remain disappointed in the insurance support and process post flood.

## 11.7 **Rural City of Muray Bridge** Any items from Mayor Wayne Thorley.

Past items included:

- Boating Safety. What groups currently exist and how can be more work be done to improve river safety (particularly in light of events from Australia Day long weekend).
- Seeking to do more that supports the River Murray to be a tourism icon, and subsequently see more tourism products come to market (such as the possibility of river cruising and connecting with Journey Beyond).
- Grants. Concerns expressed about the outlay Councils have to do as part of the process of applying for grants, and the time it is taking to receive outcomes and subsequent funding.
- Expressed interest in having more online sessions.
- Police Commissioner  
A recent meeting with the Police Commissioner went very well. Some items discussed included a strategy for river safety and change for the better. This was timely given recent incidents on the river over the public holiday long weekend.
- Federal Grants  
They are experiencing long time frames with federal grant programs at the moment.
- MDBA Conference  
Promoted the next MDBA conference on 29 and 30 July will be held at Murray Bridge and invited everyone to get their tickets and come along.

## 11.8 **Southern Mallee District Council** Any items from Mayor Ron Valentine.

Past items included:

- Reported the Councils main focus remains on financial sustainability and there will be more news emerging in 6 weeks to share with the subsidiary.
- Financial Sustainability – still the main focus for the Council
- Decommissioning Assets
- Dentist closed

## 12 **CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING**

2026 Meeting Schedule :

| Meeting Type  | Month           | Venues (tba)                                                                                  |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Board Meeting | July 2026 (AGM) | TBA                                                                                           |
| Board Meeting | October 2026    | TBA<br>The provisions for caretaker period will be reviewed before this meeting is scheduled. |

*Note: The July AGM will require voting for MRLGA President and Vice President.*

## Previous General Board Meeting Minutes



Murraylands and Riverland  
Local Government Association

# Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association

Date Thursday 5 February 2026

Venue Murraylands Skills Centre, 12 Bridge Street, Murray Bridge

## **DRAFT** General Board Meeting Minutes

|         |                                        |
|---------|----------------------------------------|
| 9:45am  | Arrival, Registration + Tea and coffee |
| 10:00am | Meeting Opened                         |
| 1:30pm  | Meeting Closed                         |

## Special Forum

## Visit with Minister Szakacs

2:00pm – The Minister was an apology.

*Being a unified local government sector  
working in the best interest of the region and our communities*



|                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MINUTES FOR THE<br/>GENERAL MEETING OF<br/>THE MURRAYLANDS &amp; RIVERLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION</b></p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

|              |                                                                 |
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| ATTACHMENT 1 | Minutes from Previous Board Meeting                             |
| ATTACHMENT 2 | Landscape Board, MR Regional Update                             |
| ATTACHMENT 3 | PIRSA, Principal Regional Advisor Update                        |
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| ATTACHMENT 5 | SA Drought Hub, 24/25 Summary of Achievements                   |
| ATTACHMENT 6 | Cross Border Commissioner – Border Update                       |
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| ATTACHMENT 9 | Quarterly Financial Statements                                  |

## 1 WELCOME

### Acknowledgment of Country

### Collective Stewardship

### Presidents Welcome

Chairperson, Mayor Ella Winnall to open the meeting.

Welcome Board Members and invited guests. Apologies were registered from

- Mayor Paul Simmons, Coorong District Council
- Mayor Simone Bailey from Mid Murray Council
- Mayor Trevor Norton
- Acting Mayor Jonathan Pietzsch from Coorong District Council
- Heather Barclay, Ceo from Rural City of Murray Bridge

Welcome new representatives to the Board:

- Cr Georga Warhurst from Mid Murray Council.

## 2 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Pursuant to Clause 3.3.1 of the Charter and Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), board members are required to declare any potential conflict of interest(s).

Mayor Ella Winnall declared she is a board member of Country Arts SA.

## 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A copy of the General Board Meeting Minutes is provided at [Attachment 1](#) (including attendance register).

### Motion

*“Minutes from the MRLGA General Board Meeting held at the Barmera Club on 30 October 2025 be taken as read and confirmed.”*

*Moved, **Mayor Caroline Phillips (DCKEM)** Seconded **Mayor Peter Hunter (RPC)** Carried*

## 4 ACTIONS REGISTER

- There were 26 board actions from 23/24, of which the following 2 items remain pending.

| 20 October 2023 - General Meeting |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Action:                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1                                 | <b>Charter Review</b><br><i>It would be best to align the MRLGA voting processes with the sector</i><br><i>MRLGA Ceo to research other lga's voting procedures.</i><br><i>Agreed that the item is brought back to the Board Meeting in February 2024.</i><br><br>That the MRLGA Board support the proposed changes to the Charter and ask the MRLGA CEO to have them reviewed legally and any feedback brought back to the board before proceeding. | Temporarily on hold until the LGA constitutional review was completed. Councils voted at the LGA AGM November Minutes.<br><a href="#">AGM-2024-Minutes-22-November-2024.pdf</a><br>MRLGA will schedule a periodical review of the Charter in Q4 25/26.     |
| 18 April 2024 – General Meeting   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Action                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2                                 | <b>Ministerial Invite</b><br>That the MRLGA Ceo write to the new Local Government Minister and invite him to meet with the board for a broader conversation about financial sustainability in the Local Government sector.<br>If successful with a meeting MRLGA, Ceo will prepare and                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Invited early June for 25 July Meeting – unable to attend.</li><li>– Invited to 9 August meeting – unable to attend.</li><li>– Invited in late March and am working with the advisor on a suitable date.</li></ul> |

|  |                                                     |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | agenda and online meeting ahead of time to prepare. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invited to 31 July Board Meeting. Unable to attend.</li> <li>- Invited for 5 Feb (MB) – Accepted.</li> </ul> |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- 3 items remain pending from 24/25 board actions including:

|   | <b>7 August 2024 – Annual General Meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Action(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3 | <b>Regional Drought Resilience Plan</b><br>The MRLGA re-engage PIRSA and Ministers (Scriven's) Office regarding MRLGA's role in relation to MR Plan, Drought Resilience and Drought Response. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A meeting with Deputy Ceo for PIRSA has been requested and a date is pending for the 'consortium' to meet with them.</li> </ul> |

|   | <b>10 April 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4 | <b>RDRP Letter</b><br>The MRLGA Board delegate its power to President, Vice President and Ceo to finalise a letter to Minister Scriven about future governance and delivery model associated with the Regional Drought Resilience Plan in light of additional funding coming from the State and Federal Government                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pending</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| 5 | <b>Query to OSFB</b><br>The MRLGA Ceo inquire with OSFB if it would consider altering its closed delivery partner program to others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inquiry made 19 Sept '25</li> <li>- Inquiry made 22 Jan '26</li> <li>- Received reply 27 Jan '26</li> <li>- Completed</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>Reply from OSFB:</b><br>the Office for Small and Family Business (OSFB) programs are aimed at capability building for small and family businesses in South Australia. All of the programs delivered through our office align with <u>South Australia's Small Business Strategy 2023-2030</u> (Strategy) and providers for these programs are selected through a call for proposals followed by a competitive assessment process. Guidelines for each program differ but generally Councils would be eligible to put forward a proposal and be considered through a competitive assessment process. The best way to stay informed for any upcoming opportunities is to subscribe to our newsletter. Online tools and resources at <a href="https://business.sa.gov.au">business.sa.gov.au</a> provide the most up to date information to help South Australian small businesses navigate grants, support programs and resources to help with successfully starting, running, and growing their business. Councils may wish to subscribe to the newsletter for the latest news and updates (including any upcoming calls for proposals) by scrolling to the bottom of the website:<br>Website: <a href="https://business.sa.gov.au/">https://business.sa.gov.au/</a><br>Information hotline: (08) 8429 3801<br>Email: <a href="mailto:diis.smallbusiness@sa.gov.au">diis.smallbusiness@sa.gov.au</a><br>Please note emergency response programs will follow a different process and will differ depending on the circumstances/event. My contact details are below. I am happy to take further questions if any of the councils would like to discuss in more detail.<br>Kind Regards<br>Luke Temme ( <i>he/him</i> )<br>Team Leader Business Support, Office for Small and Family Business<br>Industry, Innovation & Small Business<br>P (08) 8429 3801<br>M 0439 705 774<br>E <a href="mailto:luke.temme@sa.gov.au">luke.temme@sa.gov.au</a> |                                                                                                                                                                           |

- There are 17 board actions emerging from 25/26 meetings, of which the following **3** items remain pending.

|   | <b>31 July 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Action(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                             |
| 6 | <b>Item of Business to LGA AGM re: Collection of Landscape Levy</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to liaise with Mayor Thorley on a potential motion to the LGA AGM (from Rural City of Murray Bridge) about advocacy towards the withdrawal of Council collecting State levy charges, and the concept of an alternative rate notice format for the sector that separates charges. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed</li> </ul>                                                               |
| 7 | <b>SAROC Groupings</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to confirm the groupings representation clauses (including change in regional lga president, vice president and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completed. Regional LGA's cannot conduct voting (it must be done by LGA</li> </ul> |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | proxy (either specific or flexible nomination).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | and SAROC Reps cannot have proxy's).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 8  | <b>Procedure for items of business to National Ministerial Meetings</b><br>LGA to advise of the process to achieve item(s) of business for Ministers Meetings (such as the ones highlighted below). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Ministers' Forum</li> <li>Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting</li> <li>National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed.</li> </ul> LGA responded on 21/10 and the information was disseminated.                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9  | <b>Letter to LGA in support of Mayor Simmons being a nominated representative on the SA Drought Advisory Group</b><br>The MRLGA Board agree to co-sign a letter from MRLGA to LGA in support of Mayor Simmons as nominee for the role LGA representative on the SA Drought Advisory Working Group.                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10 | <b>Invite new Landscape Board Ceo</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to invite the new Landscape Board Ceo (when known) to an MRLGA meeting, and inform them of a desire to discuss the region having the States highest landscape levy.                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed. New Ceo will visit Councils separately.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11 | <b>RDRP</b><br>That the MRLGA Board:<br>Support the MRLGA Ceo to pursue an agreement with consortium partners that establish a 12 month shared role for drought resilience coordination using the \$140k Implementation Funding.                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 12 | <b>RDRP</b><br>That the MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to negotiate for equal division of delivery funding to each three consortium partners, and for it to progress drought resilience initiatives and report back to the Board on its progress".                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Underway</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 13 | <b>RDRP</b><br>The Board support the MRLGA Ceo as the signing officer on funding proposals associated with RDRP funding."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14 | <b>Personnel Changes</b><br>The Board approve for its banking systems and forms to remove Mayor Phillips and add Mayor Bailey to the Banks SA and BBO system in line with President and Vice President appointments following the AGM.                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Underway, but is currently stalled with BankSA.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 15 | <b>Flood Funding</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to liaise with Mid Murray Council about the financials of flood funding and if it can write to the crap to access the remaining funds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MRLGA Ceo met with MMC Ceo 13 Jan. MMC will review more of the financials and be in touch if further advocacy is needed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                     |
| 16 | <b>MMC requested</b><br>MRLGA Ceo to invite Hon Kirsty McBain to tour the Murraylands and Riverland.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not yet undertaken</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 17 | <b>RPC requested:</b><br>The need to list an agenda item for the Adelaide Freight Bypass (and risks/ potential impacts from the delivery stages of this project)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item raised with Ceo Network on 6 Nov '25 during its meeting with Senior Executives of DIT. While early concept design work is progressing, the State seeks 80/20 funding arrangements with Feds before further design work.</li> </ul> |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <b>30 October 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|    | <b>Action(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 18 | <b>SAROC Reps Attendance</b><br>The MRLGA Board temporarily suspend having delegates attend SAROC meetings until LGA can demonstrate confidence in governance, democratic process, value and outcomes back to the regional grouping, and ask SAROC Chair to speak with regional grouping about solutions for improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Underway. Refer to Item 5.3</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 19 | <b>One Basin CRC</b><br>Ceo to inquire about CRC's acting arrangements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avril Hogan<br/> Chief Operating Officer<br/> One Basin CRC<br/> Email   <a href="mailto:avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au">avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au</a><br/> Ph   0400 628 257<br/> Web   <a href="http://www.onebasin.com.au">www.onebasin.com.au</a></li> </ul> |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                      |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20 | Ceo to see if more updates/information on CRC can be shared with the Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | - MRLGA Ceo has a meeting with One Basin CRC Co on 3 Feb to discuss query.           |
| 21 | <b>Sustainable Communities Program</b><br>The MRLGA Board support the MRLGA Ceo to prepare a submission to the SCP in accordance with the scope parameters outlined in agenda Item 8.4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | - Research and investigation is underway. An application has not yet been confirmed. |
| 22 | <b>Administration fees for regional delivery on behalf of PIRSA</b><br>That the MRLGA Ceo liaise with PIRSA Ceo about agenda Items 8.5 with a view to structuring an arrangement that supports regional local government associations to participate in drought prepared opportunities, but not at the expense of the councils operational and regional priorities that support the sustainability of local government. | - In line with item 3 and 12 – this action is underway.                              |

### **Motion**

*“That the MRLGA Board note the actions completed and those underway from the previous meetings.*

*Moved, **Acting Mayor Georga Warhurst** Seconded **Mayor Peter Hunter (RPC)** **Carried***

## **5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

### **5.1 ALGA**

The board noted and reviewed ALGA's:

- Current Policy Work
- Representation on forums and committee groups
- Advocacy, Events & News
- ALGA President Updates
- Submissions
- ALGA calls for urgent action on National Packaging Reform – ALGA
- ALGA welcomes the national solar panel recycling pilot – ALGA
- ALGA welcomes the passage of EPBC Act reforms – ALGA
- ALGA welcomes the National Climate Change Partnership – ALGA

Brief discussion was held on:

- National General Assembly (Canberra) – 23 to 25 June 2026

Discussed the advocacy opportunities that would be available if the MRLGA Ceo attends this year's NGA in Canberra. The Board agreed the Ceo may attend at her discretion, and if so, coordinate with Councils Mayor and Ceo attendees.

- Reinstatement of the national inquiry into local government sustainability – ALGA

Members were offered the opportunity to leave the meeting to watch the public hearing the Federal Government was holding (at 11am) on financial sustainability. This was declined by members.

A link to a recording of the public hearing is below (play begins at 17:40mins)

[House Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport | 05/02/2026](#)

- Webinar : National Rural Health Alliance

A brief overview of the advocacy the National Rural Health is undertaking was provided including a synopsis of the \$8B gap.

## 5.2 LGA of SA

The board noted and reviewed LGA's:

- Topical Update
- LGA Strategic Plan
- LGA State Election Priorities

A link to the LGA State Election Priorities is below:

[LGA's 2026 state election priorities | LGA South Australia](#)

The Board discussed the advocacy items listed in the LGA State Election Priorities paper. Early feedback raised that there could have been more items and regional priorities.

### **Motion**

*"The MRLGA Ceo to provide feedback to the LGA about the process for advocacy in the lead up to future (State and Federal) Elections."*

*Moved, **Mayor Wayne Thorley (RCMB)** Seconded **Mayor Peter Hunter (RPC)***

***Carried***

The board noted and reviewed LGA's:

- LGA Road Advocacy
- LGA Board Meetings
- Local Government Ministers Forum
- LGA Events

## 5.3 SAROC

The board noted and reviewed the:

- Governance update
- Update on MRLGA Board Meeting - Action Item 18

### o **SAROC Representatives Update**

SAROC regional representative Mayor Caroline Phillips reported on:

- The SAROC & LGA Board meeting with Minister Joe Szakacs on 4 December 2025 but that there were no agreed actions resulting from the meeting.
- The joint meeting between MRLGA representative's and LGA representative's on 30 January 2026 regarding Action Item 18 (advocating for improved governance and systems at LGA for regional and rural councils). Stating LGA was receptive to all the feedback and that it understands the issues being raised by the MRLGA Board. However it will take time to effect change.

The MRLGA President acknowledged the additional work fallen to Mayor Phillips as the single Saroc representative and a result of Action Item 18 but that it had been important to raise inefficiencies in the system and her time is valued in the pursuit of improved governance arrangements with its peak body and efficiencies. The MRLGA President stated she is happy to continue participating in discussions with LGA on behalf of MRLGA that support reform and new governance arrangements for the sector (even though she is not a Saroc Representative).

A board member stated the LGA is there to represent Councils not elected members.

**Motion**

“The MRLGA Board support SAROC representatives to attend meetings at times when items are pertinent to regional priorities. It supports the MRLGA Ceo, President and SAROC Representatives to continue dialogue with the LGA Ceo and President to advocate for improved engagement and advocacy frameworks with all Councils.”

*Moved, **Mayor Wayne Thorley, RCMB** Seconded **Mayor Ron Valentine SMDC***

***Carried***

○ **DROUGHT**

The board noted and reviewed the information and update on Drought:

- State Government Support Package
- Advocacy
- Council rate deferral scheme *Led by LGA*
- SA Drought Advisory Group Meeting *Led by PIRSA*
- Extreme sand drift *Led by Councils and MRLGA*
- Grant Information

○ **Limestone Coast Local Government Association**

**Invited Speaker** Charlotte Edmunds, LCLGA Ceo

**Topic** Advocating for a Commissioner for Agriculture

Welcome Charlotte Edmunds, Ceo of LCLGA (online) to present to MRLGA about the merits of a Commissioner for Agriculture. A summary of the issues threatening agricultural land use in Limestone coast region was provided to the group as well as the challenges within existing ‘systems of government’ that limit more transparency, decision making and outcomes. An example of how NSW has approached a Commissioner for Agriculture can be read via the link : [NSW Agriculture Commissioner](#) Some discussion was had that while the appointment of a “Commissioner” may yield improvement it may not fix the problem at large and whether a modernized government model / structure is needed.

Future advocacy may include:

- an independent review of drought support package (to assess ff it provided the support that was needed and when it was needed)
- the drought commissioner role be made permanent and altered to ‘agriculture’
- the government investigate the scope and role of a Commissioner for Agriculture in SA.

**Motion A**

“The MRLGA Board, support (in-principle) the LCLGA proposal to investigate a Commissioner for Agriculture in South Australia, amidst growing challenges facing the regional and rural areas and the need for an expert, independent role to act in the best interest of South Australian Agriculture. Further support would be subject to the scope, powers and functions of the role.”

*Moved, **Mayor Caroline Phillips, DCKEM** Seconded **Mayor Peter Hunter, RPC***

***Carried***

The board noted the emerging governance arrangements that will arise with:

- LGA Board Nominations Interfacing with Elections

## 6 REGION WIDE AGENCY UPDATES

The board noted the reports from region-wide organisations, partners and stakeholders are below:

- PIRSA
  - Regional Development Australia, Murraylands and Riverland
  - Zone Emergency Management Committee (ZEMC)
  - Murray Darling Association
  - SA Drought Hub
  - One Basin CRC (Loxton)
  - SAPOL
  - Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act
  - River Murray listed as critically endangered
  - Country SAPHN
  - SA Cross Border Commissioner
  - Country Arts
- 
- Landscape Board, Murraylands and Riverland

### Action

The MRLGA Ceo to draft feedback on the Landscape Boards Strategic Plan for the Boards review before submitting.

### Action Item 19

The MRLGA inquired with One Basin CRC about the Acting Ceo arrangements given the role is vacant. The role is temporarily being filled by :

#### **Avril Hogan**

Chief Operating Officer

#### **One Basin CRC**

Email | [avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au](mailto:avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au)

Ph | 0400 628 257

Web | [www.onebasin.com.au](http://www.onebasin.com.au)



One Basin CRC is holding an Annual Conference in Renmark on 19 and 20 August. Tickets to the event are only open to partners, however MRLGA can access tickets to the event and will keep the board informed.

One Basin CRC advised the incoming Ceo appointment must be filled by a qualified researcher given the role oversees PHD students and they are finding these skill sets harder to recruit for in regional and rural settings. The Mildura CRC Ceo role has been vacant for more than 12 months so any support the Councils can do to promote the role is welcomed.

### **Motion**

*"That the MRLGA Board note and accept the regional stakeholders written reports and/or minutes shared."*

*Moved, Mayor Peter Hunter RPC    Seconded Mayor Wayne Thorley, RCMB    Carried*

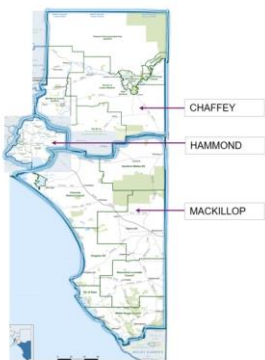
### **Board Member Attendance Note:**

- Mayor Wayne Thorley RCMB left the room at 11:30am and did not return.

## 7 STATE NEWS & STRATEGY'S

The board noted the following State Updates:

- State Government Elections

| The Local First Nations Voice<br>Region 4<br>Murraylands, Riverland and South East | Federal Electoral Division Barker                                                  | State Election Boundaries                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |  |  |

#### Action

MRLGA Ceo to find contact details for the elected Local First Nations Voice, Region Murraylands, Riverland and South East.

Details below:

[Members of the State Voice | First Nations Voice to Parliament](#)

An Information Sheet on “How do members work with me and my community?” is attached via this link : [FNV-Explainer-Flyer-A4-SouthEast-WEB.pdf](#)

#### Danni Smith - Murraylands, Riverland and South East region



Danni is an Eastern Arrernte, Guringdji, Kurna, Narungga Nukunu and Ngarrindjeri woman.

A proud mother and grandmother, she is passionate about working for her community.

She is keen to actively contribute to systemic change and particularly seek out positive outcomes and opportunities for mob, by Truth telling.

#### Rob Wright - Murraylands, Riverland and South East region



Rob is a Ngarrindjeri man who has lived in Berri on Erawirung Country – the Lands of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee - for over 35 years.

Currently working in Human Resources, he often challenges organisational policy to promote a safer workplace for First Nations Peoples and is particularly passionate about their recruitment, retention and development in the workplace.

Rob is keen to bring a measured voice of neutrality for First Nations People and influence the best possible outcomes for communities, where the next generations can have the opportunity to thrive.

- Community Cabinet – Murray Bridge - Thursday 5 February
- State & Local Government - Economic Partnership Accord
- State Waste Strategy
- State Public Health Plan
- State 30 Year Public Transport Strategy
- State 30 Year Transport Plan
- Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan
- State Development Coordination and Facilitation Office
- Drought Response & Recovery Coordination Bill
- Council Rates, Electricity Generator Bill
- Standing Committee 22/23 River Murray Flood Event
- Murray Mallee Regional Plan

Ongoing concern was tabled that (past) population projections have been used to inform the next 4-5 years of population growth for some regional areas, and this is at-odds with local analysis and projections. Whilst it may be remedied through the Local Area Plans, it was disappointing to see the methodology not alter through the consultation process.

## 8 FEDERAL NEWS & STRATEGY'S

The board reviewed and noted the following Federal Updates:

Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development, Communication , Sport and the Arts

- More than 280 road safety upgrades coming:
- Brisbane 2032 Unveils Games Vision : “Believe Become Belong”
- Digital connectivity mapping tool indicators - Have Your Say
- Australia’s 2035 emission reduction target (62-70%)
- Federal Pre- Budget Submissions

## 9 MRLGA : Quarterly reflections and/or current and emerging items

The board reviewed and noted the following MRLGA Updates:

- Strategic Planning Towards 2030 / 2031 – Research underway
- Regional Public Health & Wellbeing
  - Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plan – (Stage 1) Review commencing soon
  - Office Recreation, Sport and Racing Partnership – Progressing well
  - Preventive Health SA Partnership – Milestone reached to commence work plan
- Regional Waste Management & Resource Recovery
  - Regional Quarterly Targets
  - The quarterly (written) update measuring waste data against strategic goals is provided at Attachment 7.
  - Waste Services Kerbside Review – Draft Report Complete
  - Waste Education – Underway by external provider while role is vacant
  - Circular Economy – Early advocacy and exploring a partnership
- Climate Ready Regions – Seeking 5 Yr commitment from Fed + State Governments
- Regional Transport
- SA - Special Local Roads Program – Planning Underway
- **Murray Darling Basin - Water Recovery – Grant Opens**

The motion was void as Councils have been informed that the program is \$20m.

### Motion

*“That the MRLGA Ceo write to PIRSA seeking clarity on:*

- *If the Program is \$20m or \$14m (since the public announcement) and*
- *If the program will be opened each year of SCP or just for Round 1 (if all funds get allocated).*
- *The value of administration fees the State has/will receive from the Federal Government to administer the program.*

*Moved,*

*Seconded*

- **Future Drought Fund - Regional Drought Resilience Program (MR Plan)**

MRLGA Ceo updated the board on Arkellah Irving’s appointment to the role of Rural Resilience Coordinator. This is a trial role until August working across the ‘consortium’ (ie Landscape Board, MRLGA and RDA).

The following program budget amounts were tabled and advised that MRLGA may not be the optimum representation for the region at this stage of the process, while it transitions to on ground delivery. An update will be reported to the Ceo Network after a meeting with PIRSA on regional delivery arrangements.

A link to the Federal Funding Agreement for FDF / RDRP is:  
[SA - RDRP Phase 2 agreement Signed 20250815.pdf](#)

|                        | 25/26   | 26/27   | 27/28   | 28/29   | Total   |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Federal Funding</b> | \$1.7 M | \$1.8 M | \$1.6 M | \$1.5 M | \$6.8 M |
| <b>State Funding</b>   | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     | tbc     |

There are 6 regions under the RDRP program, and under the assumption funding is dispersed equally, the future forecast would appear as:

|                   | 25/26     | 26/27     | 27/28     | 28/29     | Total   |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Per Region</b> | \$296,423 | \$310,585 | \$271,391 | \$263,762 | \$1.1 M |

Note: This excludes the State funding, as this is tbc.

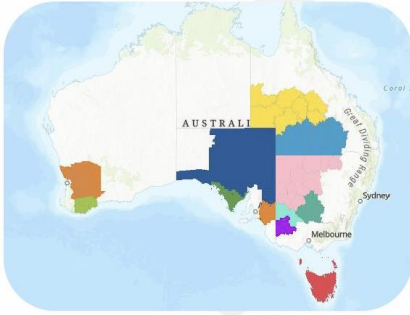
- **Future Drought Fund - fRRR – Community Impact Program (\$900k in 26/27 + 27/28)**

The Community Impact Program was promoted to Councils for their awareness and assist with planning for the program.

### Community Impact Program - Grants

*(Delivered by FRRR )*

- Locally-based NFPs collaborate to design projects that respond to local drought preparedness needs
- FRRR leads Project Design process with independent facilitator, and responds to RDRP/s.
- Projects documented in Regional Roadmap
- NFP Organisations apply to FRRR to deliver individual projects, and where approved, multi-year grant funding brings roadmap to life.
- 1 x Region Coordinator Organisation per region applies to FRRR to act as paid local contact and network convenor
- Up to \$900,000 per region
- Up to \$150,000 per project
- 2 x 'Loops' of Project Design and Collaborations over multi year period to end Dec 2028.





Program element 1

- **Regional Digital Connectivity**

A 23/24 Budget promise by the State Government was made to deliver a Statewide Digital Connectivity Plan :

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Statewide Digital Connectivity | This initiative aims to deliver a Statewide Digital Connectivity Plan, to inform strategic planning and whole-of-government decision-making for investment in digital connectivity for South Australia. This will ultimately help improve connectivity in areas within South Australia that do not have adequate coverage. | Office of the Chief Information Officer,<br>Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The State Government replied on 21 January 2026 stating the Plan was not developed and therefore will not be released. Retracting from this commitment will disadvantage region and rural areas from having transparent access to the States investment towards improving regional and rural digital connectivity.

**Motion**

“The MRLGA support the MRLGA Ceo to refer the regional digital connectivity matter to relevant state and federal members.”

*Moved, **Mayor Caroline Phillips, DCKEM** Seconded, **Mayor Peter Hunter RPC** Carried*

## 10 FINANCIAL

### 10.1 Quarterly Financial Statements

Quarterly Financial Statements were tabled.

**Motion**

“That the MRLGA Board accept the financial statements submitted for the quarter ending 30 December 2025.

*Moved, **Mayor Ron Valentine, SMDC** Seconded **Acting Mayor Georga Warhurst, MMC**  
**Carried***

### 10.2 Risk & Audit Committee Exemption

MRLGA Ceo requested a new item – Risk and Audit Committee Exemption.

The MRLGA Subsidiary holds an exemption from the Minister from having a Risk and Audit Committee. This exemption can be extended by application and requires each Council to consent to the exemption to support an application.

**Motion**

“The MRLGA Board support the continuation of the exemption for MRLGA from having a risk and audit committee, given the subsidiary is externally and independently audited each year to the same standard as Councils.”

*Moved, **Mayor Peter Hunter, RPC** Seconded **Mayor Ron Valentine, SMDC** Carried*

## 11 MRLGA ARCHIVES

### 11.1 Records Management

The MRLGA Ceo provided an overview of the subsidiary’s records management arrangements, including the management of hard-copy files. A solution was sought that complies with legislative records-management requirements and removes the ongoing obligation on the Ceo to store these materials. Several options were considered, and the preferred option was set out below.

**Motion**

“The MRLGA Board support the Ceo to release an EOI to (constituent) Councils who can perform records management services to scan all documents and register them in Sharepoint, as well as organise all documents pre-1980 in categories for MRLGA Ceo and President to determine their value for long term archival and report back to the Board (before any permanent documents are destroyed). If a Council is unable to deliver the service, the MRLGA will seek an external provider.

*Moved, **Mayor Ron Valentine, SMDC** Seconded **Acting Mayor Georga Warhurst, MMC**  
**Carried***

## 12 ROUND TABLE

### 12.1 Berri Barmera Council

- Mayor Ella Winnall summarised the meeting with Minister Scriven on 28 January 2026, sharing that more pressure will result on the “machinery of government” for more intergovernmental models (in regional and rural areas) where solutions require dynamic cross departmental workings to tackle complex problems. And this is currently a barrier to cohesive efforts and progress.
- Confirmed BBC is delivering their last Flood Recovery Project. Acknowledging the extensive time that recovery actually takes, and that Council will also now be able to re-coup funding that it has had to carry since the event (years ago).
- The past and current challenges of the wine industry persist and impact its community significantly. The Riverland Councils have requested a DPC led working group, concerned the current model is not working and there is strong need for a more inter-governmental approach.

Past items included:

- RLGF: Letter from Minister for Infrastructure and Transport regarding the maintenance of a navigable channel on the River Murray.
- Update post visit with RDA Murraylands & Riverland Board on 23 October 2025.
- RLGF has issued a letter to Minister(s) if the River Murray is ‘navigable’ and are waiting a reply. The reply will be shared with the group.
- The background to this issue relates to obstructions in the river and responsibility.
- Office of Small and Family Business
- Asked the MRLGA Ceo inquire with Office of Small and Family Business if it would consider altering its (closed) delivery partner program to other
- Bank stabilisation learnings for Ski Club
- Asked if others have had success with bank stabilisation to pass back on to its ski club (in terms of products, design, specification or contacts). MRLGA offered to email the Infrastructure committee on their behalf and advise.

### 12.2 Coorong District Council

Acting Ceo, Myles Somers reported:

- an update and apology from Paul Simmons.
- confirmed Cr Jonathan Pietzsch is Acting Mayor and Cr Roundtree is Deputy Mayor.
- Health Services remain the top priority for the community

Past items included:

- Update on SA Water partnership at Wellington East
- Reviewing how to fund jetty upgrades
- Impacts from Drought
- Delivering “Unbreakable Farmer” sessions
- Liaising with the PHN on local issues
- CDC has reviewed its hardship policy
- Impacts of Little Corellas are ongoing and growing, including that on mental health.
- Further work and advocacy is being led by Council in light of the withdrawal of health services, and the following challenges and impacts that ensue. 40 submissions from community have been received to support Councils advocacy

### 12.3 District Council of Loxton Waikerie

No representative present.

Past items included:

- Councils levels of support and/or facilitation of Justice of the Peace services
- Spoke to the outcome of the South Australian Boating Facility Advisory

- Committee (SABFAC) panel recruitment
- LGA Visit  
LGA Ceo, Clinton Jury and a bus of visitors came to DCLW to see a stormwater / cwms project of theirs.
- Changing Places Public Toilet  
Promoted a recent project of Council to build a changing places toilet facility. Stated there are only 20 in SA but that they were able to receive 50% funding to build it.

#### 12.4 District Council of Karoonda East Murray

Mayor Caroline Philips reported:

- Council is undertaking a Community Survey, one of the first in many years.
- It is pleased to be able to co-invest in its unsealed road network and re-sheeting as a result of being successful in SLRP funding and is a meaningful contribution to the condition of its roads.
- Impacts from extreme sand drift remain a big problem in their municipality and causing financial impacts because of reactive road maintenance needed to keep roads open.
- DKCEM is leading a drought survey (co-ordinating with 4 other Murraylands Councils including SMDC, CDC, RCMB and MMC)

Past items included:

- Recent events (like Mindarie races drew 3000 people and it is having a Kick off Your Boots visit, that are all helpful for community spirit during drought).
- DCKEM is initiating a local Murraylands Drought Survey (12 months on) and invited others to express interest if they wish to undertake it in unison
- Murraylands Drought Survey - It consulted with Preventive Health about the drought survey and it was a productive conversation around community comments in public surveys. They were supportive of the survey work Council(s) had done.
- 40 Year Anniversary for Farm Fair  
Proud to have a farm fair that's been going on for so long, although they may consider scaling it back to 1 day.
- General Practitioner  
A Doctor may be coming in April.

#### 12.5 Mid Murray Council

Acting Mayor Georgia Warhurst updated on acting arrangements and that Cr Jen Davis will be Acting Mayor shortly.

Past items included:

- Financial Sustainability Round Table
- River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve
- Rating pressure – a story was shared about rate rise pressures to community's and vulnerable (agricultural) areas.
- Foundation SA
- Standpipes Funding  
It is anticipating success via a strengthening industry grant program for funding associated with 14 standpipes and getting them automated.
- Regional Partnership Funding  
They hope some good news is coming soon.
- LGA OGM  
Reiterated that MMC is advocating for adjustments to the FA Grants formula and will be looking forward to the discussion at the upcoming LGA OGM.

#### 12.6 Renmark Paringa Council

Mayor Peter Hunter reported:

- RPC has a meeting with the Health Minister's advisor soon to receive an update on the status of the recommendations in the SA Review of Rural Mental Health Services: [May 2023: Rural Mental... | Office of the Chief Psychiatrist | SA Health](#)

- RPC prepared an advocacy booklet that they have used for many of their meetings (including with ministers) and it's been a great document to have.
- Echoed the comments from BBC that the financial management of a State Emergency (ie floods) needs major reform for local government, as regional and rural Councils should not be so financially burdened, impacted and crippled from allocating resources and rebuilding infrastructure for a state emergency and advocacy for reform must continue.

Cr Margaet Howie (as MDA region 5 Chair) reported:

- the Murray Darlin Basin Plan Review is underway and it is encouraging others to participate in the engagement sessions coming up and revisit the content of the MRLGA Water Advocacy paper.

Past items included:

- RPC presented to the RDA Murraylands and Riverland Board on 23 October about its Jane Eliza development.
- It will sit on the Flood Warning Committee.
- It hosted the last SAROC meetings and LGA Board meetings in Renmark and included a local river cruise to show its recently completed wharf redevelopment and highlights other initiatives of RPC
- Cr Howie advised she is a representative on the SA Recreation and Boating Safety Committee. It has recently released its Strategy (2025-2030) <https://www.marinesafety.sa.gov.au/south-australia-recreational-boating-safetystrategy>
- Mayor Hunter met with the SA Mental Health Commissioner in January 2025.
- Navigation of the River will table at the next Riverland Forum for discussion.
- Awareness about limitations of Mental Health Services in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Murray, Mallee and Riverland - Local Health Network  
They are seeking an update from Wayne Champion / LHN on the status of the 30 recommendation made in the Mental Health Services review.
- Insurances  
They remain disappointed in the insurance support and process post flood.

## 12.7 Rural City of Murray Bridge

No representative present.

Past items included:

- Boating Safety. What groups currently exist and how can be more work be done to improve river safety (particularly in light of events from Australia Day long weekend).
- Seeking to do more that supports the River Murray to be a tourism icon, and subsequently see more tourism products come to market (such as the possibility of river cruising and connecting with Journey Beyond).
- Grants. Concerns expressed about the outlay Councils have to do as part of the process of applying for grants, and the time it is taking to receive outcomes and subsequent funding.
- Expressed interest in having more online sessions.
- Police Commissioner  
A recent meeting with the Police Commissioner went very well. Some items discussed included a strategy for river safety and change for the better. This was timely given recent incidents on the river over the public holiday long weekend.
- Federal Grants  
They are experiencing long time frames with federal grant programs at the moment.
- MDBA Conference  
Promoted the next MDBA conference on 29 and 30 July will be held at Murray Bridge and invited everyone to get their tickets and come along.

## 12.8 Southern Mallee District Council

Mayor Ron Valentine reported:

- Council moved a motion to sell the depot building Lameroo to Emergency Services

and this has resulted in >90 submissions. Approximately 8 are for the sale and the remaining oppose the sale.

- Council moved a motion to prepare for a community 'vote' on the strategic direction Council should take for its framework on sustainability. Four options were outlined in the motion (pg 117):

Agenda of Ordinary Council Meeting - Wednesday, 21 January 2026

Summarised as :

- o Service Expansion with Efficiency Savings and Partial Rate Increase
- o Service Expansion Funded by Rates
- o Maintain Current Service Levels and Minimise Rate Increases
- o Investigate Council Amalgamation Options

Each option has its own considerations, risks and changes.

Past items included:

- Reported the Councils main focus remains on financial sustainability and there will be more news emerging in 6 weeks to share with the subsidiary.
- Financial Sustainability – still the main focus for the Council
- Decommissioning Assets
- Dentist closed

### 13 CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING

2026 Meeting Schedule :

| Meeting Type  | Month           | Venues (tba) |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Board Meeting | 9 April 2026    | Lameroo      |
| Board Meeting | July 2026 (AGM) | TBA          |
| Board Meeting | October 2026    | TBA          |

Caretaker period in the lead up to the 2026 Local Government Elections may commence September / October 2026.