



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*



MINUTES FOR THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE MURRAYLANDS & RIVERLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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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	Charter Review <i>It would be best to align the MRLGA voting processes with the sector</i> <i>MRLGA Ceo to research other lga's voting procedures.</i> <i>Agreed that the item is brought back to the Board Meeting in February 2024.</i> 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. AGM-2024-Minutes-22-November-2024.pdf MRLGA will schedule a periodical review of the Charter in Q4 25/26.
18 April 2024 – General Meeting		
Action		
2	Ministerial Invite 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. If successful with a meeting MRLGA, Ceo will prepare and	– Invited early June for 25 July Meeting – unable to attend. – Invited to 9 August meeting – unable to attend. – Invited in late March and am working with the advisor on a suitable date.

	agenda and online meeting ahead of time to prepare.	- Invited to 31 July Board Meeting. Unable to attend. - Invited for 5 Feb (MB) – Accepted.
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- 3 items remain pending from 24/25 board actions including:

	7 August 2024 – Annual General Meeting	
	Action(s)	
3	Regional Drought Resilience Plan The MRLGA re-engage PIRSA and Ministers (Scriven's) Office regarding MRLGA's role in relation to MR Plan, Drought Resilience and Drought Response.	- A meeting with Deputy Ceo for PIRSA has been requested and a date is pending for the 'consortium' to meet with them.

	10 April 2025	
	Action	
4	RDRP Letter 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	- Pending
5	Query to OSFB The MRLGA Ceo inquire with OSFB if it would consider altering its closed delivery partner program to others.	- Inquiry made 19 Sept '25 - Inquiry made 22 Jan '26 - Received reply 27 Jan '26 - Completed
	Reply from OSFB: 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 business.sa.gov.au 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: Website: https://business.sa.gov.au/ Information hotline: (08) 8429 3801 Email: diis.smallbusiness@sa.gov.au 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. Kind Regards Luke Temme (<i>he/him</i>) Team Leader Business Support, Office for Small and Family Business Industry, Innovation & Small Business P (08) 8429 3801 M 0439 705 774 E luke.temme@sa.gov.au	

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

	31 July 2025	
	Action(s)	
6	Item of Business to LGA AGM re: Collection of Landscape Levy 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	SAROC Groupings MRLGA Ceo to confirm the groupings representation clauses (including change in regional lga president, vice president and	- Completed. Regional LGA's cannot conduct voting (it must be done by LGA

	proxy (either specific or flexible nomination).	and SAROC Reps cannot have proxy's).
8	Procedure for items of business to National Ministerial Meetings LGA to advise of the process to achieve item(s) of business for Ministers Meetings (such as the ones highlighted below). - Local Government Ministers' Forum - Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting - National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting	Completed. LGA responded on 21/10 and the information was disseminated.
9	Letter to LGA in support of Mayor Simmons being a nominated representative on the SA Drought Advisory Group 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	Invite new Landscape Board Ceo 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	RDRP That the MRLGA Board: 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	RDRP 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".	Underway
13	RDRP The Board support the MRLGA Ceo as the signing officer on funding proposals associated with RDRP funding."	Completed
14	Personnel Changes 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	Flood Funding 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.
16	MMC requested MRLGA Ceo to invite Hon Kirsty McBain to tour the Murraylands and Riverland.	Not yet undertaken
17	RPC requested: The need to list an agenda item for the Adelaide Freight Bypass (and risks/ potential impacts from the delivery stages of this project)	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.

	30 October 2025	
	Action(s)	
18	SAROC Reps Attendance 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.	Underway. Refer to Item 5.3
19	One Basin CRC Ceo to inquire about CRC's acting arrangements.	Avril Hogan Chief Operating Officer One Basin CRC Email avril.hogan@onebasin.com.au Ph 0400 628 257 Web www.onebasin.com.au

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	Sustainable Communities Program 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	Administration fees for regional delivery on behalf of PIRSA 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

Ph | 0400 628 257

Web | 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*

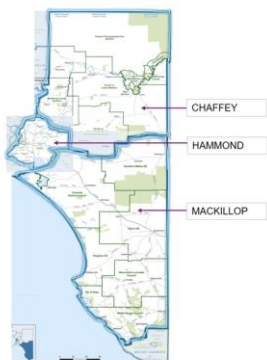
Board Member Attendance Note:

- 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 Region 4 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
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.

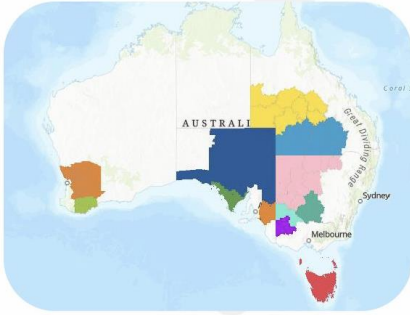
- **Future Drought Fund - fRRR – Community Impact Program (\$900k in 26/27 + 27/28)**

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, Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)
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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 surmised 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.

Attendance Register

5 February 2026

MRLGA BOARD MEMBERS

Berri Barmera Council (BBC)	Mayor Ella Winnall, President and Chair
Coorong District Council (CDC)	-
District Council Karoonda East Murray (DCKEM)	Mayor Caroline Phillips
District Council Loxton Waikerie (DCLW)	-
Mid Murray Council (MMC)	Acting Mayor Georga Warhurst
Renmark Paringa Council (RPC)	Mayor Peter Hunter
Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB)	Mayor Wayne Thorley
Southern Mallee District Council (SMDC)	Mayor Ron Valentine

MRLGA

Ceo	Carron McLeod
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CEO NETWORK

David Beaton	District Council Loxton Waikerie
Myles Somers	Coorong District Council

Deputy Mayors

Cr Margaet Howie	Renmark Paringa Council
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ATTENDING & INVITED GUESTS

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APOLOGIES

Mayor Simone Bailey	Mid Murray Council
Mayor Paul Simmons	Rural City of Murray Bridge
Acting Mayor Jonathan Pietzsch	Coorong District Council
Mayor Trevor Norton	District Council Loxton Waikerie
Minister Joe Szakacs	Minster for Local Government
Angus Cavanough	Ministers Advisor