

# MLDRIN Winter Newsletter 2018 (2)

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## Welcome to MLDRIN News! - Winter 2018

We love sharing stories and updates about MLDRIN's work to advance Aboriginal water rights across the Southern Murray Darling Basin! We acknowledge the Elders and Traditional Owners who are working across the region to protect and restore our sacred rivers. If you would like to submit info or stories for the next MLDRIN news email [eo@mldrin.org.au](mailto:eo@mldrin.org.au)



Ngintait Traditional Owners during a waterway assessment by the Murray River

## MLDRIN Presents to the Royal Commission

MLDRIN Delegates, Directors and staff presented to the South Australian Royal Commission on the Murray Darling Basin in July. The Royal Commission was set up to investigate allegations and community concerns about mismanagement of water resources and public funding in the Murray Darling Basin. MLDRIN's Chair and Executive Officer highlighted weaknesses in the

Basin. MLDRIN's Chair and Executive Officer highlighted weaknesses in the Commonwealth Water Act (2007) and Basin Plan in terms of requirements for Aboriginal consultation and management of water resources. MLDRIN put forward a range of proposed changes to the Water Act 2007 that will strengthen the recognition of First Nations' rights and interests. [You can view media coverage of MLDRIN's attendance here.](#)



## First Nations' input to Environmental Water planning

MLDRIN has been working with the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to develop a new approach to incorporating First Nations' objectives into the annual Basin Environmental Watering Priorities. The [annual Priorities document](#) provides guidance to Commonwealth and State water holder on how environmental water should be used to maximise positive outcomes. MDBA is required to consider Aboriginal values and uses in developing the priorities. MLDRIN has developed a six-stage approach which will incorporate input from existing research as well as Nation-based working groups to ensure unique cultural objectives are included in the priorities. Stay tuned for more updates on this project.



## Aboriginal Waterway Assessment program evaluation

In June MLDRIN completed an evaluation of six Aboriginal Waterway Assessments (AWAs) conducted in the Victorian Murray Darling Basin. The AWA tool has been designed to help First Nations' document their water-

dependent cultural values and advocate for improved outcomes in river management. MLDRIN received funding, in 2016, to run six AWAs in the Victorian Basin. An evaluation of the six projects, conducted by an independent consultant, shows that the AWA is delivering real results for Victorian Traditional Owner groups! Participants who were surveyed for the evaluation recorded positive impacts of the AWA program including: improved understanding of waterway management, greater influence and empowerment in water planning, improved outcomes for local rivers and stronger partnerships with Catchment Management Authorities and other government agencies. MLDRIN will be building on the outcomes of the evaluation to improve the next round of AWAs. If you would like more information on the Aboriginal Waterways Assessment please visit <http://www.mldrin.org.au/what-we-do/aboriginal-waterways-assessment/> or email [eo@mldrin.org.au](mailto:eo@mldrin.org.au).



## Out and about in the Southern Basin

MLDRIN Delegates and staff have been busy working with Southern Basin Traditional Owners and government agencies to progress First Nations' water rights and interests. Here's a snapshot of what we've been up to.

### Barapa Water for Country celebrates five years

In June MLDRIN reps were thrilled to attend a celebration event commemorating five years of the Barapa Water for Country Project. MLDRIN has collaborated with Barapa Barapa Traditional Owners and the North Central CMA on Aboriginal Waterway Assessments and other activities as part of the project. It was exciting to hear about all the achievements made since the project got under way and to watch Barapa Barapa Traditional Owners remove bark from a beautiful old Red Gum to make a traditional bark canoe. MLDRIN Administration Officer Likarra Morgan was awarded a certificate in recognition of her work on the project. Congrats to all involved!!

### **Big Murray Bus Trip**

In June MLDRIN ran the inaugural 'Big Murray Bus Trip', taking in key sites between Albury and Deniliquin. The bus trip was run as part of a larger Murray Valley Stewards program, with funding from the [Murray Lower Land Services](#). The aim of the program is to empower Traditional Owners to have a more active role in decisions about water and other natural resources in the Murray region are managed. Participants visited water management infrastructure, ecologically significant wetlands and cultural sites to build their understanding of how First Nations representatives can have a say in water planning.

### **First People's AWA**

In April MLDRIN completed the final Aboriginal Waterway Assessment (AWA) in the series of six funded by the Victorian Government. Ngintait Traditional Owners assessed 12 sites along the Lindsay River in North West Victoria, recording cultural values and identifying objectives for water management. Now is a critical time for Traditional Owners to have a strong say in water planning decisions in the Mallee CMA region, with major infrastructure projects being developed as part of the [Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism](#).

### **South Australian MLDRIN reps Meeting**

In June, MLDRIN reps attended a meeting of South Australian MLDRIN Delegates in Adelaide. The SA MLDRIN reps meet regularly to discuss Aboriginal engagement in water planning in South Australia. MLDRIN Reps presented on the findings of the Cultural Flows Research Project.

### **Tati Tati workshop**

In July, MLDRIN helped to coordinate a meeting of Tati Tati and Wadi Wadi Traditional Owners in Robinvale to discuss inputs to a Water Resource Plan for Northern Victoria. Tati Tati and Wadi Wadi Traditional Owners are using tools such as the Aboriginal Waterway Assessment to identify watering priorities and holding community discussions to set objectives which can be included in water resource plans. Water Resource Plans are being developed across the Basin up to June 2019. State governments are required to undertake consultation for First nations about their objectives and preferred outcomes for water resources. If you or your Nation group would like any support engaging in discussions with State Governments please contact our Engagement Officer at [kaleana.mldrin@gmail.com](mailto:kaleana.mldrin@gmail.com).

### **Upcoming Dates**

14th-18th October, [International RiverSymposium](#), Sydney

15th-16th November, MLDRIN Annual General Meeting, NSW (Location TBC)  
17th-18th November: [Three Rivers Festival](#), celebrates Aboriginal Arts, Culture & Sport on Yorta-Yorta country. Moama Sports Club.

Get it touch! If you have content to submit for future MLDRIN News editions please send your ideas to [executiveofficer.mldrin@gmail.com](mailto:executiveofficer.mldrin@gmail.com)

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