

# Murray Darling Basin stakeholder forums

## COORONG AND LOWER LAKES AND MOAMA

Before mid 2008 it became apparent that the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) areas were facing a serious ecological crisis. In May 2008, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council directed the Community Advisory Committee to work with stakeholders to coordinate two 'invitation only' stakeholder forums regarding management options for the Coorong and Lower Lakes. Through these forums held at Murray Bridge in South Australia and Moama in New South Wales, stakeholder and community views would be formulated and provided to Ministerial Council to assist Ministers' consideration of the immediate and short-term management options.

## THE FORUMS AIMED TO

- Build on stakeholder and community consultation done to date
- Inform both the local and upstream communities of the state of the CLLMM
- Consider proposed management options for the CLLMM
- Identify implications and stakeholder attitudes to these options
- Seek stakeholder recommendations of alternate options and the community's expectation about future consultation.

## CLIENT

Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC)

## TIME FRAME

July 2008

## THE ROLE OF SEFTON & ASSOCIATES

Robbie Sefton facilitated the two forums and worked with the MDBC to draw all the findings into a report, with the commitment that every suggestion and comment raised would be in the material presented to the Minister. The final report drew out the key themes and recommendations from the forums in a coherent and clear distillation.

## COMMUNICATION GOALS

The forums themselves and the resulting report are now being used by the Minister and the MDBC in the complex decision-making process about the CLLMM.

## KEY OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The two workshops, dealing with complex issues and intense emotions, were expertly facilitated

so that all participants felt heard and recorded. After the workshop the findings and suggestions were drawn together under seven main themes: The need for urgent action, guiding principles and values, exploring the problems and challenges, short term approaches – preferred options, longer term approaches – preferred options, social/ cultural considerations and questions and further issues. This allowed those receiving the report to comprehend and assess the large volume of material arising from the workshop.

## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Robbie demonstrated a strong understanding of natural resource management issues, and an excellent ability to facilitate groups that include people from varying backgrounds and interests.

Her willingness to undertake extensive preparation and background work was reflected in the quality of the events that she facilitated.

Robbie's positive approach and strong interpersonal skills were valuable, and she was able to provide additional strategic advice on communications strategies to deal with complex, contentious environmental issues.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE