



MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Membership Drive 2020



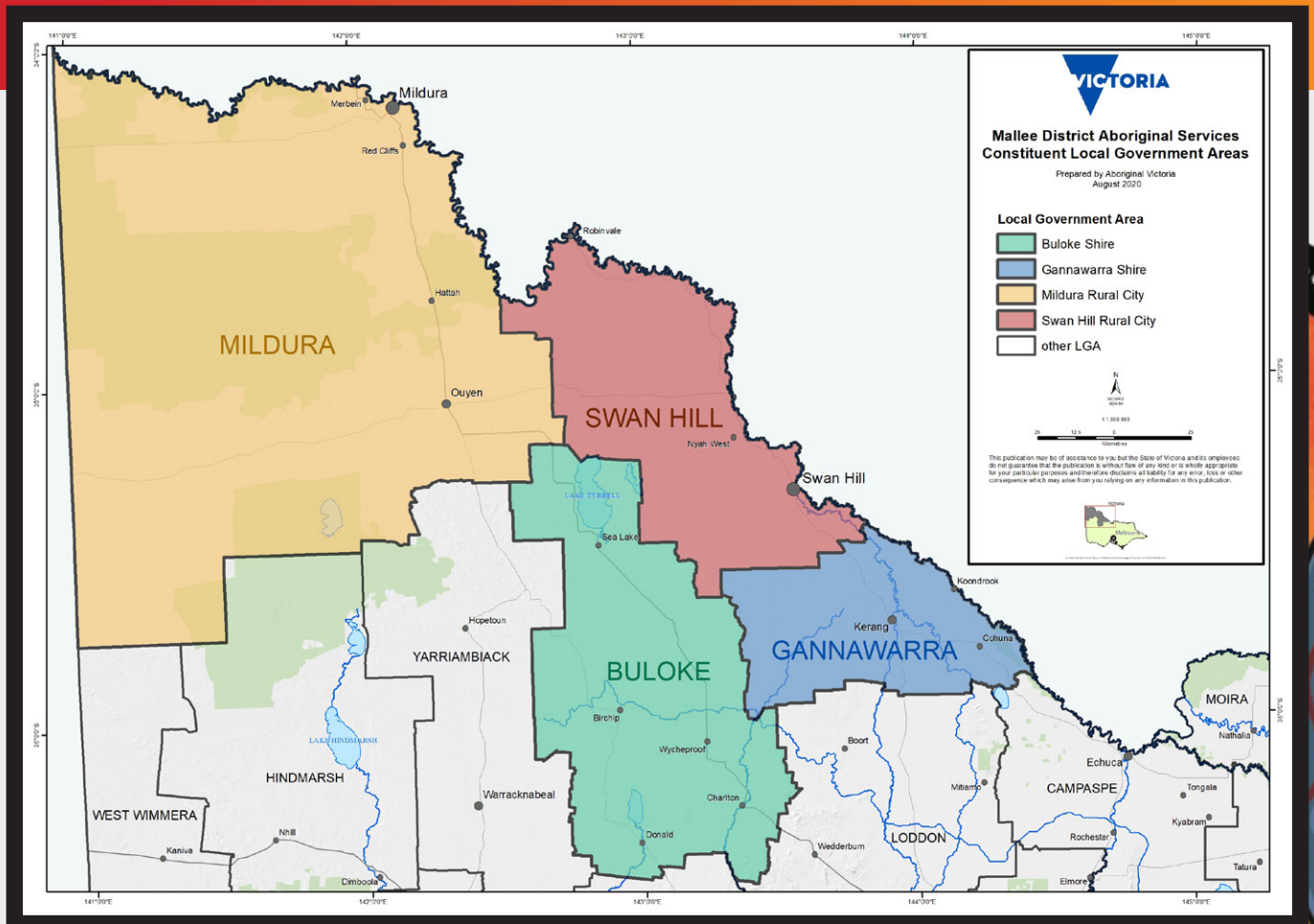


About the Membership Drive

- Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) provides important health and wellbeing services for Aboriginal people in Mildura, Swan Hill, Robinvale and Kerang.
- The MDAS Board wants to broaden community representation so we continue providing services that meet the needs, priorities and aspirations of our communities.
- Representative and inclusive membership is at the heart of Aboriginal community controlled organisations.
- MDAS is undertaking a Membership Drive to ensure membership is open to all Aboriginal adults living in the Mallee.
- Aboriginal Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) are supporting MDAS in this important work.
- We want to achieve a membership base that reflects the full breadth, diversity and strengths of all the local Aboriginal communities that MDAS serves.
- The Victorian Government will work closely with the MDAS Board, management and staff during this time to help us strengthen our governance structures to ensure they are underpinned by self-determination and meet the expectations of local communities.
- Aboriginal people in the Mallee deserve access to services that are culturally safe, relevant and in line with community preferences.

Am I eligible?

- I am at least 18 years old
- I am of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent
- I live within the Mallee Region, being the shire of Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural Council, Gannawarra Council, and Buloke Shire Council.



Am I ready?

1. I have a Confirmation of Aboriginality certificate
2. I agree to comply with the MDAS Constitution and support its purposes
3. I have completed a Membership Form

1.

Confirmation of Aboriginality

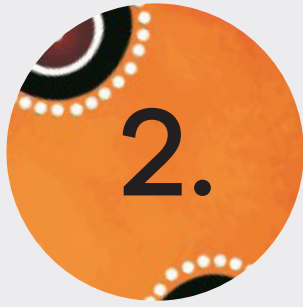
Your application to become a member of MDAS must be accompanied by a Confirmation of Aboriginality.

You can apply to MDAS for a Confirmation of Aboriginality (**Form 1**). The Board considers applications where the applicant and their family heritage is known to the Board, and where they meet all eligibility requirements.

In cases of Stolen Generation or disconnection from family, the MDAS Board will consider applications where the applicant provides supporting documentary evidence (from Link-up or other such family history or reunification services) that your family heritage is Indigenous.

If your family heritage is from outside of the Mallee District, you should instead seek your confirmation from a relevant local Indigenous organisation in the area where your family is from.





Summary of MDAS Constitution

To become a MDAS member you need to support the charitable purposes of MDAS and agree to comply with the MDAS Constitution. Below is a summary of the MDAS Constitution, including its purposes. You can download a copy of the full Constitution from the MDAS website.

Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited - Summary of Constitution for Members

What is the Mallee District Aboriginal Service?

Established in 2013, the Mallee District Aboriginal Service Limited (**MDAS**) is an Aboriginal community controlled organisation and north west Victoria's major service provider for the delivery of person-centered, holistic care for Aboriginal people. Founded on the values of optimism, community, compassion and respect for culture, the vision of MDAS is to create generations of vibrant, healthy and strong Aboriginal communities.

MDAS offers innovative programs and initiatives which assist Aboriginal people with their health, family, housing, aged care, substance abuse, training, community development, rehabilitation and justice needs. With a workforce of more than 50% Aboriginal employees, MDAS currently employs over 200 staff across their service centres in their Mildura, Swan Hill, Kerang and Robinvale offices.

As stated in the MDAS Constitution, MDAS is a company limited by guarantee¹ and a registered charity, whose charitable purposes include:

- Promoting social and recreational activities for Aboriginal people in the Mallee District;
- The protection of Aboriginal heritage and culture;

- Strengthening collaborative approaches to holistic Aboriginal service delivery; and
- Implementing policies and strategies which improve the physical, spiritual, emotional, and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Mallee District.²

What is a MDAS Member and why are they important?

MDAS is made up of representative member owners. A MDAS Member means a person who has applied for and been included on the MDAS Register of Members³ as an owner of the organisation.

Having a membership which is representative of the Aboriginal communities MDAS serves promotes the self-determination of the community and is a fundamental aspect of Aboriginal community controlled organisations such as MDAS. By exercising their voting rights, MDAS Members play an integral part in the decision-making and governance of the organisation and ensure the operations of the organisation represent the evolving needs and wants of the community.

Who can become a MDAS Member?

To become a MDAS Member you need to first fulfill the following criteria:

- Be an Aboriginal person;
- Be over 18 years of age; and

- Reside within the Mallee Region (being in the shire of the Mildura Regional Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Gannawarra Shire Council or the Buloke Shire Council).⁴

People residing in NSW cannot become a MDAS Member.

The Board of Directors can also reject applications for membership where the applicant does not comply with the MDAS Constitution or has been charged and/or convicted of a serious offence.⁵

How to apply to become a MDAS Member?

To become a MDAS member you need to submit a written, signed application to the organisation which states that you (1) want to become a member, (2) support the charitable purposes of MDAS, and (3) agree to comply with the MDAS Constitution.⁶ The written application must also be accompanied by a Confirmation of Aboriginality.

Once your application has been received, the Board of Directors will resolve whether to accept or reject the application for membership and notify you of the outcome.⁷ Once the Board has formally accepted the new Membership, they can exercise their rights as a MDAS Member.⁸

If a membership application is rejected, the Executive Director of MDAS will review the Boards' decision to determine if it is reasonable. This is not a constitutional requirement but a process the MDAS Board has agreed to for the duration of the 2020 Membership Drive.

What rights and obligations do MDAS Members have?

MDAS Members have the right to (a) attend Members meetings which are called by the Board⁹ providing at least 21 days' written notice¹⁰ and (b) vote on business decisions (pass resolutions) which affect the functions and activities of MDAS at these meetings. To pass a resolution at a Members meeting, a minimum of 15 Members must be present for the duration of the meeting.¹¹

Appointing a Board of Directors with sufficient skill and experience is a key responsibility for MDAS Members. The MDAS Board of Directors are accountable to the MDAS Membership,

and Members have the power to appoint and remove Director's from office.¹²

As a charity, all profits of the organisation must go back to pursuing its charitable purposes, so MDAS Members are not entitled to receive any profits, income or assets from the organisation.¹³

NOTE: Members agree to pay a guarantee of \$1 to the organisation if it is wound up (ends).¹⁴

Can MDAS Members be appointed as Directors?

Yes. The MDAS Board of Directors has between 3 and 9 office holders¹⁵ and manages the business of the organisation in accordance with the MDAS Constitution and other relevant laws.¹⁶

To be appointed as a Director, you must:

- Already be a MDAS Member;
- Be over 18 years of age;
- Have no more than 2 immediate family members already appointed as Directors;
- Not be an employee of MDAS if you are joining a Board where the majority of Directors are already employees of MDAS¹⁷

Candidates must submit a written nomination signed by a MDAS Member and accompanied by the candidate's consent and resume of skills and abilities to the MDAS Secretary not less than 7 days before the next scheduled Annual General Meeting (AGM). Candidates must also give a short presentation about themselves and their skills to the Membership at the AGM for their assessment.¹⁸

1 Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited (MDAS) Constitution, clause 1. Available from: https://www.mdas.org.au/getattachment/ABOUT-MDAS/MDAS-Board/MDAS_Constitution_November_2016.pdf.aspx.

2 MDAS Constitution, clause 1.2.

3 MDAS Constitution, clause 1.4.

4 MDAS Constitution, clause 2.2.

5 MDAS Constitution, clause 2.8.

6 MDAS Constitution, clause 2.3.

7 MDAS Constitution, clause 2.4.

8 MDAS Constitution, clause 2.6.

9 MDAS Constitution, clause 11.1.

10 MDAS Constitution, clause 11.2.

11 MDAS Constitution, clause 12.2.

12 MDAS Constitution, clause 3.6.

13 MDAS Constitution, clause 20.1.

14 MDAS Constitution, clause 1.1.

15 MDAS Constitution, clause 3.1.

16 MDAS Constitution, clause 4.1.

17 MDAS Constitution, clause 3.4.

18 MDAS Constitution, clause 3.2(c).



Membership Form

To become a MDAS member you need to submit a completed and signed Membership Form (**Form 2**).

Submit your completed Membership Form and Confirmation of Aboriginality:

- By email to membership@mdas.org.au
- By post to MDAS, PO Box 5134 Mildura, VIC, 3502
- In person at the MDAS reception at Mildura, Swan Hill and Kerang.

Need help?

Call (03) 5018 4100 or email membership@mdas.org.au if you want help accessing, completing or submitting your application.

