



# Customer Newsletter

## Rochester-Campaspe Operations

November 2007

### From the Water Service Committee Chairman

Once again we find ourselves under very difficult circumstances – a second year of low allocations for Goulburn customers and only 5% for Campaspe customers after zero last year and very low allocations the two years prior to that.

In these tough times we must support each other. Help others and don't be afraid to ask for help yourself. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it is in fact the opposite, for it takes a strength of character to admit to yourself that the obstacles you are facing seem insurmountable. A brochure is enclosed with this newsletter detailing where you can turn to for help – PLEASE READ IT AND USE THE SUPPORT OFFERED.

Carryover of unused water was offered to Goulburn-Murray Water customers for the first time at the end of last season and those who took advantage of the concept have benefited enormously this year. The WSC has recommended that carryover continue (with a slight amendment to have the first lot of carryover registered against Low Reliability Water Share to lessen the chance that it will be forfeited if allocations improve) until such time as there is a 100% allocation of high reliability water share.

The WSC has made a submission in response to the Foodbowl Modernisation Draft Report. In the submission, we reaffirmed our long held position of opposing any proposal to take water south of the Great Dividing Range. Also raised in the submission were a number of issues with various aspects of the report.

The Reconfiguration Working Group has met several times during this year and is currently awaiting the release of maps showing each "pod" ( a pod is a small sub-section of the irrigation area) so these maps can be circulated to the relevant customers. Small pod meetings will be called to discuss the options for change (if any) that are suggested by the maps. Customer consultation and input is a vital part of the reconfiguration process so please make the best of the opportunity to discuss the future of irrigation in your area when it is offered.

I know it is probably a little early, but can I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and lets look forward to a wet and profitable 2008.

**Richard Anderson**  
**Rochester-Campaspe WSC Chairman**

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### WaterLINE Ordering on Web

Customers can now order water via the internet with Waterline online. Most of the phone features are available online and you can print your own **Water Usage Statement**.

WaterLine Online is available at [www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au) and then follow the links to your area.

**OFFICE HOURS**  
8:00AM - 4:30PM  
41 High Street  
Rochester  
PH: 5484 0400

## G-MW Reponds to Foodbowl Steering Committee

At the time of writing this newsletter, we are eagerly awaiting the release of the FoodBowl Steering Group's Final Report that will outline the Committee's recommendations to improve the efficiency of the irrigation network right across the Goulburn Murray region and with the \$1 billion investment.

Last month G-MW provided its response to the Steering Committee. Our submission builds on:

G-MW's experience in managing the existing irrigation infrastructure in the GMID;

G-MW's experience in undertaking a range of reconfiguration and modernisation projects albeit on a smaller scale to that possible under the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, and

Our desire to ensure the efficient and effective management of the overall irrigation network once the project is complete.

Alongside a range of detailed suggestions, G-MW recommended four key areas be addressed as the project proceeds.

1. Customer perceptions and expectations need to be managed, especially with regard to supply, service and ongoing operating costs of a modernised system
2. The Project's outcomes need to remain effective over the longer term – potentially the next 100 years – particularly with regard to the operation and management of the overall irrigation supply network, as well as the public-private interface, ownership and management.
3. Existing Government regulatory agencies and legislation including other state and Federal water reform agendas need to be appropriately reflected in any proposed approach
4. The project must aim to maximize the proportion of the \$1 billion that is spent on infrastructure upgrades, and we support the Steering Committee's comments that the SUE will be a lean, focused and agile decision making board that leverages the skills and resources already available in the region.

Once the Final Report is released we will review our existing capital works, modernisation and reconfiguration programs to align them with the Food bowl Modernisation program. We expect there will still be some detail to be worked through but the FoodBowl Steering Committee's Final Report will provide a starting point for an exciting new vision for our region, with the local expertise, financial support and community leadership to see it delivered

## Processing of Water Trades Improving

Our regions move to a more flexible and responsive water trading environment has coincided with the worst drought on record, and as a result exceptional high water prices. These factors have significantly increased the number and urgency for many customers in confirming their water trades.

G-MW is currently processing most applications to transfer water within 4 days, with trades within the G-MW region confirmed within 10 days. Obviously there are individual applications that are more complex and have required longer processing times, especially application involving trades and transfers outside the G-MW region. Since July, G-MW has received more than 5,000 applications for water share and allocation trade, at least four times the number we receive in a normal year. We are also working with DSE and other Water Authorities to smooth out the remaining 'teething' issues.

### Tips for applying and tracking your water trades

1. Record your application number. This makes it easier to track your application from when its received by G-MW through to its approval.
2. Check your water balance on WaterLINE to ensure you have enough water for the transaction.
3. Complete every field on the application form including your Allocation Bank Account number (ABA)
4. If you are trading as a company, make sure you provide a current company extract with your application.
5. Signatures - either the authorised agent or every owner of the water share must sign the original form before it is submitted. (Forms to nominate an authorised agent are available at [www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au)).

## Goulburn System

### Water Resources Position

The Goulburn storages have reported well-below average rainfall in recent months. Only 18.8 mm of rain was recorded at Lake Eildon and 5.8 mm was recorded at Waranga Basin during October. Good rains occurred at the start of November, although warm and dry conditions have since dominated. By 14 November, rainfall totals were 40.8 mm at Lake Eildon and 29.4 mm at Waranga Basin.

The early November rainfall provided useful inflows to the Goulburn storages, after October inflows were less than one-quarter of the monthly average. Lake

Storage	This year (14 Nov)	Last year
Lake Eildon	829.6GL (24.9%)	528.7GL (15.9%)
Waranga basin	138.1GL (31.9%)	155.9GL (36.0%)
Greens Lake	13.1GL (40.4%)	9.2GL (28.5%)

### Seasonal Allocation and Outlook

The Goulburn system seasonal allocation is now 35% of high-reliability water shares. Inflows to Lake Eildon following rainfall in early November supported the recent improvement.

Gravity irrigation customers are reminded that the season will now close on the traditional 15 May date in 2008 after being initially shortened to boost early season allocations.

### Residential Water Use

Customers (including syndicates) with metered use can choose to water lawns and gardens. If the use is not metered, Goulburn-Murray Water deems an annual use. Under the current drought conditions, Goulburn-Murray Water has decided to restrict deemed use to garden watering only.

If customers with deemed use wish to water lawns, enough allocation must be bought to cover the additional water use. Syndicates without metered use should also restrict watering, or buy allocation to cover lawn watering in the deemed use.

Use in excess of the permitted volume will incur an overuse fee of \$2,000 per ML.

## Campaspe System

### Water Resources Position

Lake Eppalock received only 2.8 mm of rain during October, but had reported 21.6 mm to 14 November. Despite the rainfall in the first half of November, inflows to Lake Eppalock remained extremely low and the storage volume continues to decline.

The 14 November 2007 volume in Lake Eppalock was 14.7 GL (4.8% of capacity). The volume is shared between Goulburn-Murray Water, Coliban Water and the North Central Catchment Management Authority. Goulburn-Murray Water's share of the total volume was 10.2 GL.

One year ago, Lake Eppalock was holding 7.3 GL or 2.4% of its capacity. The Goulburn-Murray Water share of the volume was 6.4 GL.

### Seasonal Allocation

The 15 November 2007 seasonal allocation in the Campaspe system is 5% of high-reliability water shares following the confirmation of Coliban Water's operating plan

All irrigation orders are being strictly rostered to minimise losses and support efficient operations. For further information about your access to irrigation, please contact your local office.

## State Government Delivers Drought Assistance

The State Government's very welcome drought relief package includes rebates for fixed water charges and funds to cover the cost of pumping Waranga Basin.

The account you receive this month will already include the Government's rebate, with the amount indicated by a negative sign on your bill.

A leaflet detailing where you can access further information about other State and Federal assistance has also been included with customer accounts, and we encourage all customers to explore their options for assistance during such a difficult year.

**ROCHESTER-CAMPASPE WATER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Richard Anderson (Chairman)	Western Zone	5483 2214
John Hewlett	Western Zone	5486 5278
Bill McMinn	Western Zone	5483 2233
Ron Brooks	Western Zone	5482 1548
Liz Wright	Western Zone	5486 2476
Peter Gibson	Eastern Zone	5484 5226
Ian Whatley	Eastern Zone	5482 1062
Mark Hill	Eastern Zone	5484 6204
Bruce Macague (Deputy Chairman)	Campaspe Zone	5484 2225
Ken Parker	Groundwater	5484 1498

**Winter Works Program**

A very successful Capital Works Program has been carried out over Winter. Due to dry constricting conditions and low demand more Works were completed than was originally anticipated. The following jobs have been completed.

WWMC 4 x Subways	Ch 3/18 Road culvert	Ch 5/8 Echuca Nanneella Rd Xing
Ch 1/27 combination structure	Ch 1/14 combination structure	Ch 2/6 combination structure
Ch 1/27 Regulator & outlet	Ch 11/11 outlet replacement	Drain 1/1/6 occy-crossing
Ch 16 New Regulator	Ch 3/23 bank remodelling	Drain 6 occy-crossing

**Low Allocation Response**

In low allocation situations such as this, it is vital that we all try and make every drop of water count. From a G-MW perspective, staff members are being asked to keep channel outfalls to zero if possible and look at every situation to minimize water losses. This also extends to those planning the water deliveries, who are striving to strike a balance between customer service levels, water use efficiency, and labour input. We have reduced the number of staff actively operating our channel system to reduce the cost impact on customers, but this means each staff member has to cover a bigger area.

The impact of all the above is that customers may have to start at times different to those they have requested. The start time given to each customer is dependent on the finish time of another customer, the availability of a staff member to regulate the water to the outlet, and the overall operation of the channel system to maintain constant flows and reduce wastage.

We realize this may not always suit customers, however the efficient running of the channel system will result in allocations being increased in line with the amount of water saved.

**Reconfiguration Plan**

The development of the Rochester-Campaspe Irrigation District Reconfiguration Plan is ongoing, with the overview complete and planning for the implementation stage underway.

Identified in the Overview Study were separate components of the irrigation system—pods, trunks and carriers. The trunk and pod components have been rated and those ratings will now be analysed.

Community consultation on individual pods will take place over the next few months and customers will be advised as to times and venues when this occurs.

**Staff Safety is Our Priority**

G-MW cannot make it rain, but it is endeavouring to share the available water as fairly and equitably as possible.

GMW recognises that the continuing drought conditions are putting customers under extreme stress and hardship, but as a responsible employer we must protect our staff. We cannot tolerate aggressive behaviour against staff trying to do their jobs and any such actions will be reported to the police.

GMW thanks all of its customers for their continuing understanding and co-operation during this very difficult period.