



Newsletter

GMW Newsletter December 2013

Message from General Manager, Retail & Operations

What an amazing year we've had. It was our busiest season for deliveries since 2002 and our biggest year of water trading for quite some time!

Best of all, even with all the delivery and water trading activity, this year we saw customer satisfaction increase by over 10%...We can certainly attribute this to our programme of work being developed around what you told us because this resulted in real improvements to our service.

So we've seen some great results but we also recognise we have a long way to go. We'll continue to seek your feedback and suggestions because we know this is the only way we can deliver what is important to you. In fact feedback received from our Water Services Committees and directly from you, has shaped our next key areas of focus, these are:

- improving the customer experience – we are easy to deal with
- improving the rollout of the Connections Project
- people development – creating a culture of taking action and ownership
- operational efficiencies – reducing cost
- implementation of a simplified tariff
- improved asset management.

I look forward to sharing our progress on these over the next 12 months and I'm really looking forward to sharing an even bigger increase in those satisfaction results next year.

Wishing you a safe and Happy Christmas.

Charlotte

Managing Director's Message

2013 has been a big year for GMW and while it's easy to focus on the big developments - business transformation, organisational system review, tariff development and redefining what it is that we're committed to achieve – we're keeping our eye on the small things that matter to you. This year we've delivered reductions in processing times, removal of fees, lowering of fees and a range of other customer focused results which reflect our commitment to 'Partner with our customers.'

Under the 'Customer' banner, GMW has been reviewing a range of internal fees, charges and processes – identifying opportunities to enhance customer outcomes. A small snapshot of this work includes:

- GMW has reduced the title search fee to \$30. Previously \$53 per title search.
- Reduced the fee for transfers from \$700 to \$182.
- Automated information statements which equates to a reduction in processing time from 20 minutes to 1 minute.
- Integration of water forms into Connections Project legal agreements – reducing the need for customers to complete up to 20 forms.
- Automated allocation trades will reduce cost from \$75.00 to \$43.70. Also reduce time for customer from 5 working days (plus a potential further 5 days with external trader) to overnight and ultimately 1 hour.

In January of this year, GMW confirmed its fundamental commitments - the commitments that will underpin all business activity at GMW. These commitments are:

1. Partnering with our customers.
2. Creating opportunities to increase agricultural production in northern Victoria.
3. A high performing organisation across northern Victoria.

We also released and consulted with customers on GMW's Blueprint. A plan to achieve our commitments through initiatives including delivering \$20 million in operational savings to enable GMW to stabilise prices; deliver the

Connections Project; and redesign tariffs to match the new infrastructure.

Our Blueprint engagement included seven public meetings held at Durham Ox, Rochester, Cobram, Kerang, Wangaratta, Congupna and Kyabram. During these sessions I addressed over 500 customers outlining GMW's vision for the next 5-7 years and the work being undertaken within the business to reduce costs and streamline business processes for our customers.

Operationally, 2012/13 was a great year. We saw the highest releases from Eildon since 1996/97 and experienced the highest number of water deliveries since 2001/2002. With such a large volume of water being delivered, I was pleased to see that 92% of water orders were delivered on the day ordered, demonstrating the increased efficiency and responsiveness in many parts of the system. Of the 215,000 customer order received, 117,000 were placed using GMW's online system. 2012/13 was also a big year for water trades with some 10,500 processed.

The Connections Project is the single largest infrastructure opportunity ever to present itself to northern Victoria and GMW. In November, Ian Rodgers was appointed the new Project Director, responsible for continuing to deliver the Connections Project on time and on budget. While we know that there are still many customers waiting to be contacted by the Connections Project, we have made solid progress to date.

Connections Project update:

- Project planning has been completed for 6,113 customers (83%)
- GMW has commenced engagement with 5,440 customers (74%)
- 2,113 customers have requested legal agreements (29%)
- 1,733 customers have an executed legal agreement (23%)
- 4,597 meters have been installed (96%)
- 422km of non-backbone channel have been decommissioned.

Christmas Closing

All GMW Customer Service Centres will be closed from 4:45pm Tuesday 24 December 2013 through to 8am Thursday 2 January 2014. Please remember you can order water through WaterLINE 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Access WaterLINE:

- online at www.g-mwater.com.au, simply follow the WaterLINE link
- by phone on 1300 469 469.

For emergencies call the GMW 24hr emergency number 1800 064 184.

Saving \$'s and Time

While others talk about cutting red tape we were actually doing it.

New processes are saving customers hundreds of dollars in application fees and weeks in processing time. The following licences now take approximately seven days to process from receipt of application and customers are enjoying these cost savings:

Licence to Construct Works (bore) for:

- **Domestic and Stock purposes** - Application fee reduced to \$375 (you save \$578)
- **Investigation and Observation purposes** – Application fee reduced to \$375 (you save \$137)

Renewal or transfer of a Licence to Construct Works:

- **Bore or Dam:** Application fee reduced to \$186 (you save \$220)

Each additional bore licence and licence renewal at the same site is now only \$160 (you save \$197)

Application forms and fees are available from www.g-mwater.com.au

Additional savings:

This year we have also accomplished the following savings for our customers:

- Quicker turn around on change of ownership of Take and Use licences. A decrease in fee which is a saving of \$500 making it easier for you to operate.
- A cost reduction for title searches now only \$30 (previously \$53).
- Savings of over \$200 in temporary transfer of licences and approval time cut by six weeks.
- A 50% reduction in the number of application fees. By condensing and combining these fees our fee structure is now easier to understand.



Managing Director's Message (Continued)

So while there is a long way to go, we are confident that through our commitment to working with our customers, we'll be in a position to ensure that the Connections Project is delivered on time and within budget.

With the year drawing to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers and stakeholders for their support this past year. I'd particularly like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the members of our Water Services Committees. Their work in providing frank and fearless advice and customer

feedback is greatly appreciated.

I hope that many of you will have the opportunity to spend time with your families and loved ones during this Festive Season. Christmas often involves spending time on the roads visiting loved ones, as you travel, please take care and remember to drive to the road conditions.

On behalf of GMW, I look forward to working with you in the New Year. A merry Christmas to you, your families and loved ones and may you have a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Fundamental Commitment to Customers

Earlier this year we announced our fundamental commitments which define what we stand for as a business. Since then we've been working hard towards achieving them.

This edition, we're focusing on our fundamental commitment: 'Partnering with our customers'.

Our achievements across the business to date include:

- **Successful implementation of the centralised Solution Centre.** This call centre ensures any customer contact we receive by telephone is managed in a consistent and positive manner.
- **New Customer Relationship Coordinator (CRC) roles, located across our region.** These positions have significantly improved the delivery of customer service as CRCs play a major role in working with customers to understand complex water issues and the options available under our Connections Project.
- **The Connections Project Modernisation Coordinators joining the Retail and Operations unit.** The shift has helped streamline and improve the customer engagement process as it includes the introduction of new frameworks to identify, capture and resolve customer issues and complaints.
- **The Connections Project office relocating from Shepparton to Tatura DEPI offices.** We continue to seek cost efficiencies and this move has reduced ongoing costs to the project.

- **Commencement of a program to identify processes that our customers tell us are complex and costly or do not add value to their businesses.** So far we have delivered; simplified change of land ownership, information statements, allocation trades and licensing processes.
- **Planning and accounting of the flows in the Goulburn River to meet irrigator demand, environmental objectives in the Goulburn and environmental water to Hattah Lakes.** This project is being delivered through a partnership between GMW, Goulburn-Broken Catchment Management Authority, Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Victorian Environmental Water Holder.
- **A Strategic Groundwater Management and Planning Workshop held to gain contributions to a five year strategic plan.** The strategic plan aims to achieve efficient groundwater management and planning outcomes in the face of changes to the Victorian Water Act and the need to meet Murray-Darling Basin Plan requirements. Senior water resource planning representatives of Rural Water Corporations and Department of Environment and Primary Industries Groundwater and Licensing Branch attended the workshop and provided valuable input.

Read more about our remaining two fundamental commitments in the next edition.

GMW Target Arrowhead

Arrowhead is a weed that can colonise most aquatic environments and is not only a threat to irrigation delivery and operations but also local biodiversity.

Where has the Arrowhead landed?

GMW's eastern irrigation areas currently experience significant operational issues due solely to persistent and arising Arrowhead infestations. In GMW's western areas this weed has not yet gained a solid foothold. For this reason, GMW's Aquatic Plants team are asking customers (especially in the west where the spread is currently contained to only a few areas) to be vigilant and report any suspected Arrowhead sites they may be aware of, regardless of its location. With the help of our customers and other members of the public the Aquatic Plants team are hoping to gain an understanding of the true distribution of Arrowhead in and around GMW's irrigation districts. We also want to aid and advise customers wishing to control Arrowhead on private lands.

What is Arrowhead?

Arrowhead is a summer-growing aquatic plant that prefers shallow, slow moving or still waters less than a meter deep. It grows in three different forms; as an underwater rosette, an emergent with thin reed-like leaves, and the most prominent and recognisable,

as an erect emergent with triangular stems and lance-shaped leaves. It has the potential to spread rapidly, being able to produce new plants via fragments, underground rhizomes, and prolific seeding.

Two other species of aquatic plant can be easily confused with Arrowhead, both being *Alisma* sp. The most obvious difference between them is that the white flowers on *Alisma* sp. are borne above the leaves, whereas those of Arrowhead are borne below.



Groundwater Update

Drier summer and autumn conditions has seen metered groundwater use across GMW increase over the 2012/13 irrigation season in comparison to the previous seasons. Groundwater levels remain relatively steady across the region following significant recharge as a result of the high level of rainfall in 2010/11. As a result all groundwater management units across the region have access to the maximum allowable allocation in the 2013/14 season.

Local area updates

You will find an update on your groundwater management area in your local area summary in the back of this newsletter.

Groundwater Reference Committee appointments

Consultative Committees responsible for the development of the Lower Campaspe Valley and Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Areas (WSPA) Groundwater Management Plans have been appointed as the Groundwater Reference Committees for each area. The role of these Committees

is to meet with GMW annually to review groundwater resource conditions and oversee Plan implementation and performance. More information is available at www.g-mwater.com.au Click on the 'Water Resources' tab and follow the link to the 'Groundwater' page.

Annual Reporting

Annual reports for 2012/13 have been prepared for the following Groundwater Management Units:

- Katunga WSPA
- Upper Ovens WSPA
- Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA
- Loddon Highlands WSPA
- Shepparton Irrigation Region WSPA
- Mid Loddon GMA
- Lower Ovens GMA

These annual reports provide an overview of the 2012/13 irrigation season including groundwater usage, groundwater level response and management activities. Reports can be accessed on our website www.g-mwater.com.au

Allocation Trade Improvements – Brokers Portal

From December 2013, water brokers will be able to gain instant approval for allocation trade applications via an online portal to the Victorian Water Register. Brokers who sign on to use the new portal will not be required to submit trade applications to GMW, instead they will lodge trades online and the system will provide an instant response.

This will significantly reduce delays for customers wishing to trade and access water quickly. The application fee for trades lodged via the portal will be lowered from \$77.60 to approximately \$40. More information is available by visiting www.waterregister.vic.gov.au and follow the link to 'My water' or contact GMW on 1800 013 357.

Lower Licence Fees For Stream Fencing

If your property abuts Crown water frontage, otherwise known as riparian land, you could be eligible to save up to \$2,100.

Landholders participating in river frontage fencing programs have the opportunity to save on Take and Use licence fees.

The savings apply to landholders with Crown frontage who opt to fence off stock access to the waterway. These landholders can have their Take and Use licence application fee reimbursed, their annual fee waived for three years and a longer licence period. Funding is provided by the State Government's Waterway Management Program and provides numerous benefits to communities and landholders. Improved vegetation and water quality, better stock management and river health are just a few of these outcomes.

These incentives are designed to lessen the financial impact of potentially gaining a domestic & stock licence.

To see if you're eligible please contact your local Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and call GMW for advice on applying for a take and use licence.

North Central CMA

(03) 5448 7124

Goulburn Broken CMA

(03) 5820 1100

North East CMA (02) 6043 7600

Mallee CMA (03) 5051 4377

New Diverters' Tariff Strategy

The Diverters' Tariff Strategy, which applies to customers who pump groundwater as well as regulated and unregulated surface water diverters, has now been finalised and approved.

GMW, with the assistance of the Diverters' Tariff Strategy Working Group, spent about 10 months developing and consulting on a draft strategy for future tariffs for licensed diverters across northern Victoria. The Working Group comprised eight Water Services Committee members, representing groundwater and surface water diverters from across GMW's region as well as GMW Board members.

GMW sought customer's views and comments on the draft Diverters' Tariff Strategy during July/August 2013 with stakeholder feedback carefully considered when developing the final Tariff Strategy.

Customer feedback on the draft Diverters' Tariff Strategy was overwhelmingly positive; with strong support for the tariff and the principles that support it. These principles include: encouraging agricultural production, tariff simplicity, clarity, transparency and equity.

The four tariff categories of: accounts, site compliance, water access management and resource management, also made sense to customers and there was agreement that the new

structure would make it easier for diverters to see how their charges related to the work that GMW does and the costs these services incur.

By providing simple and transparent pricing, the new tariff structure aims to best reflect GMW's costs of providing services to diverters.

Importantly it recognises that costs generally do not vary significantly in proportion to a customer's entitlement volume. This means that customers with a smaller entitlement will see an increase in their accounts while customers with larger entitlements will pay less.

The new Diverters' Tariff Strategy is a significant step in GMW's engagement with customers, stakeholders, and the community on diverter tariff issues. GMW's Board approved the final Diverters' Tariff Strategy in September 2013.

GMW will be engaging with diversion customers and regional Water Services Committees throughout the tariff implementation process, seeking feedback on implementation and communication of this new Diverters' Tariff Strategy. You can view the final Diverters' Tariff Strategy on our website www.gmwater.com.au

Annual Pricing Review - 2014/15

GMW has commenced planning for its Annual Pricing Review. Each year we talk with our customers about pricing and how we can keep pricing stable. We are required to submit our annual pricing submission to the Essential Services Commission who then make a determination. Our pricing for the 2014/15 year is the second pricing year under our approved Water Plan. Our pricing will reflect the commitments made in the Water Plan and incorporate the initiatives included in our Blueprint released earlier this year.

Annual Pricing Review customer consultation and communication takes place each year before our submission is finalised in June 2014 with prices effective 1 July 2014.

For more information visit www.g-mwater.com.au



GMW Work Group Set to Save

Licensing Group

In March this year GMW developed a workgroup to look at our existing Diversions fee-for-service processes with a view of simplifying forms, reducing red tape, removing obstacles and driving efficiency savings that result in cost reductions.

The Group have delivered a number of initiatives that have resulted in service improvements across a variety of functions.

While some of the improvements have seen considerable cost reductions, others have been directed at improving the usability of forms or removing additional obligations on the applicant.

We will continue to scrutinise existing activities with a view of delivering sustainable services to our customers without compromising our obligations under the *Water Act 1989* or the Minister Policies & Procedures.

GMW Connections Project - Update

Dear Customers,

With the majority of the backbone modernisation works complete, our main focus is to connect you to the backbone. We have reached the halfway point, with many of you taking advantage of the modernised system for your farm works. To date, project planning has been completed for 83% of customers.

The Winter Works for 2013 have been successfully completed, and preparation for the 2014 winter works is in full swing. This is likely to include around 100 single bay regulators being modernised, as well as around 20kms of channel remediation, and will include the commencement of works at Box Creek Weir.

Kerang Lakes Bypass and Gunbower Creek Lagoons Bypass projects are in the environmental study phases, and consultation has commenced on the Cosgrove Domestic and Stock pipeline scheme.

The Swan Hill Modernisation project continues. There is an active tender process for the detailed design of the No 9 pump station on the Little Murray Weir, and concept designs are underway for the customers supplied from the Weir.

In addition, the Program organisational structure has been refreshed, to better align with the way we need to do business with you.

We know you need more information and more contact to help you transition through the Connections Project. We know this because you told us, in surveys, feedback and Water Service Committee meetings. And we have listened.

This year we shifted our service approach to the Connections Project by redeveloping the entire Customer Relations team. Customer Relationship Coordinators were employed, a whole customer support team recruited and we tripled the number of Modernisation Coordinators. To ensure this was a cost efficient and effective strategy we assessed staffing requirements with a resource modeling tool.

With a focus to support all customers, particularly in times of change, the new, robust Customer Relations team will not only help to deliver the Connections Project but also our long term fundamental commitments.

So we now have the right resourcing and processes in place to partner with you. Our partnership will enable us to create an efficient and sustainable irrigation system in a fair and inclusive manner.

We have identified customers whose transition through the Connections Project remains incomplete. These unresolved cases range from customers who are still in the consultation phase to customers who have unfinished works.

The good news is our team have now progressed a number of these cases to closure and have dedicated staff to ensure all these issues are resolved.

If you have concerns about the completion of your project please contact GMW on 1800 013 357 or email reception@gmwater.com.au

Ian Rodgers (Project Director) and the Connections Project Team

New Connections Project Website

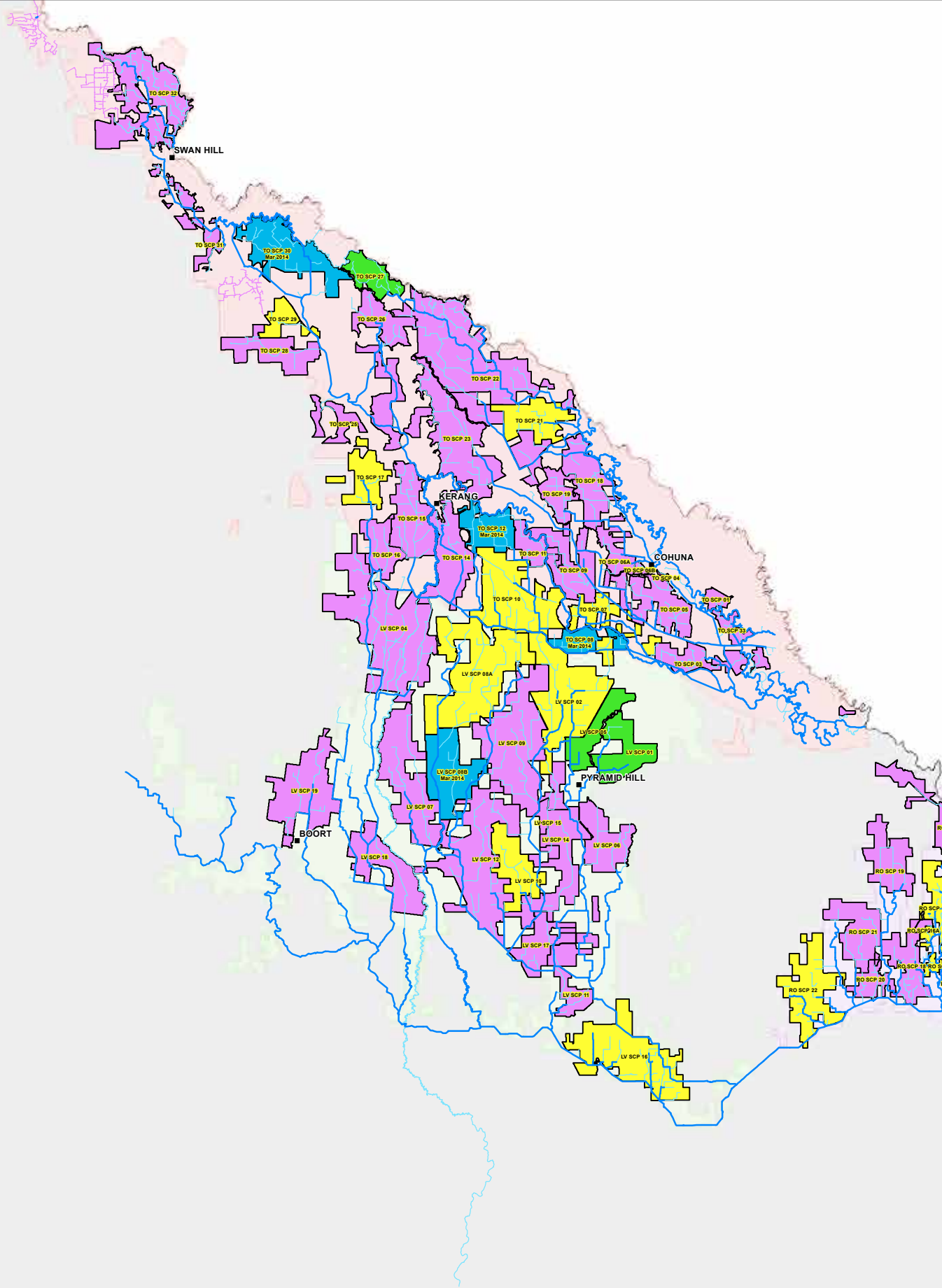
A dedicated Connections website will be live at the start of 2014.

Through this website you will be able to:

- view the progress of your Strategic Connections Project (SCP)
- obtain details of upcoming events in your SCP
- find updates and news items on the entire project
- obtain contact details of your Modernisation Coordinator.

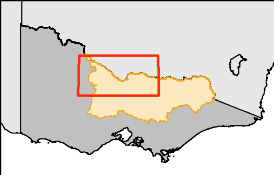
Our new Connections website is another way we will keep you up to date. Special Project information will still be available on the GMW main website www.g-mwater.com.au

GMW Connections Pro



CP-13-174
06 DEC 2013

GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER
Ph 1800 013 357
www.g-mwater.com.au



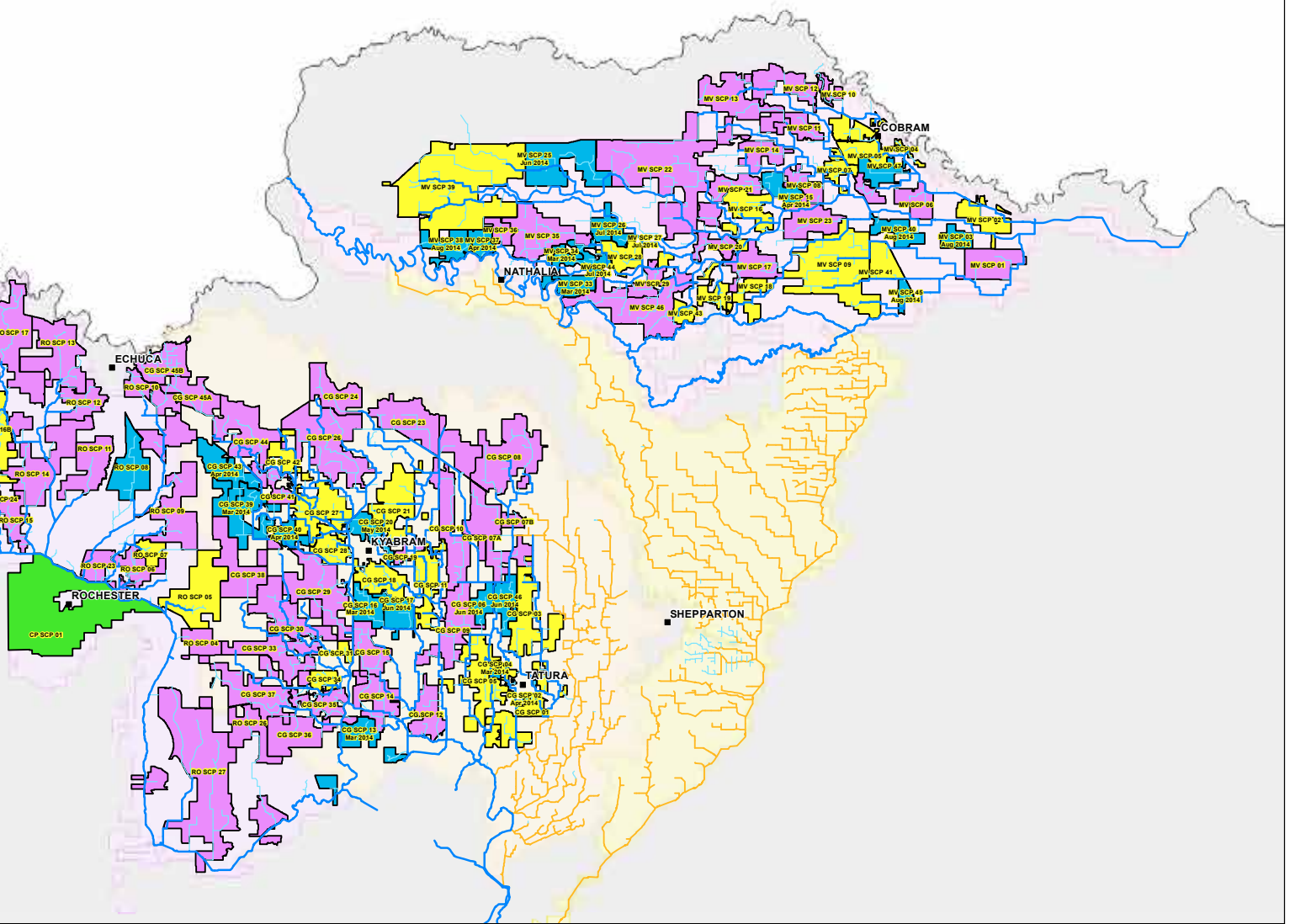
Backbone	Project Comp
Non-Backbone	Landowner S
CG1234 & Shepparton	In Consultation
Pipeline System	Not Started

Project - Progress Update

The Connections Project is a \$2 billion investment by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to provide a higher level of service and deliver more water to you more efficiently.

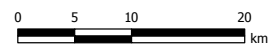
The Project involves 3 programs:

- **Backbone Modernisation Program** - improving water efficiency and service standards
- **Strategic Connections Program** - connecting properties currently supplied from spur channels to the backbone
- **Special Projects** - improving the health of important environmental sites and enhancing the water delivery services to landowners.



Complete	G-MW Irrigation Area	Rochester
Schedule Approved	Central Goulburn	Shepparton
On	Loddon Valley	Torrumbarry
	Murray Valley	

SCALE AT A1 1:325,000



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Strategic Connections Project Update

Loddon Valley SCP 05 - Success story

Under the new Connections Project delivery model, Goulburn-Murray Water has successfully completed the first Strategic Connection Project (SCP) with all agreements executed for landowners in the Loddon Valley SCP 05.

This achievement is a ground breaking milestone for the project team, to connect the first area to the upgraded backbone channel. Each area has its own complex issues and challenges to connect every property, and in many cases, this can involve continuing consultations and negotiations.

The Loddon Valley Connections staff members, led by Modernisation Co-ordinator Ted Carmody together with Carolyn Demaio, Bill Streader and Daniel Arnold, have been engaged with landowners in the Loddon Valley, to collaboratively reach an outcome. The group acknowledged that it was a team effort, in negotiating to make sure all parties were happy with the end result.

Ted stated the success of the SCP was in connecting with each and every landowner, and empathising with a diversity of situations and circumstances. 'I guess the main thing was

that there were different outcomes for all the landowners: some wanted to dry off, some still wanted to irrigate, and we also had some property consolidation' he confirmed.

This working example of success can only pave the way for future developments and completions, to build a stronger and more sustainable future for irrigation agriculture across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District.



Loddon Valley Connections team: L-R Dan Arnold, Ted Carmody, Carolyn Demaio and Bill Streader at the site of the completed Loddon Valley SCP05 backbone channel in Pyramid Hill.

Connections People

George and Sophia Wells' dairy farm off the Murray Valley Highway in Strathmerton has changed significantly since putting in nearly 1100 metres of pipeline to the backbone channel and removing a wheel on their property.

From the time they took over the farm in 2010, the couple has been looking forward to connecting to the backbone, and improving their water efficiency. Since connecting to the backbone, they have been able to deliver more water at a quicker rate with few leaks. They built a 20 megalitre channel from the outlet which travels from the north of the property right through to the south and runs with a consistent flow.

'We used to have 120 acres of permanent pasture but now we have 150' said George. 'And it used to take me 14 days to irrigate the farm. Now I can do it in 6 days'.

The new pipeline has also allowed George and his family more time to spend with each other. 'I get to go to Little Athletics with the girls every weekend now. I think I went once or twice last year so it's made a difference' said George.

In the end, George said the new system with a direct connection to the backbone has given him the flexibility and capability to send and split water to where it is needed. 'It was good to see the water come out of the pipe', said George with a smile.



“It was good to see the water come out of the pipe”

George and Sophia Wells

TORRUMBARRY IRRIGATION AREA

Torrumbarry WSC Chair Message

Torrumbarry Water Services Committee (WSC) has continued to develop in 2013 welcoming two new irrigators; Nathan Free from Tresco and Tim McNeil from Myall. The future of irrigator leadership and advocacy is very strong in our region with the addition of both these members.

Locally we saw some large irrigation flows throughout the early spring period with peak demand at times. Now, with 100% allocation on the Murray system there are some great opportunities to take advantage of this water for productive use.

With the large inflows into our two main dams we have seen water held in Spillable Water Accounts diminish very quickly making way for an increase in allocations.

Our Resource Manager recently informed us that under average inflow conditions Low Reliability Water Shares (LRWS), could become available in mid February.

A reminder that the Carry Over rules for the Murray system will change as of the 1 July 2014 in line with the current Goulburn system rules. Irrigators will be permitted to Carryover no more than 100% of your total High and Low Reliable Water Shares. Any more than this will be returned to the pool, for future allocation.

There have been some recent additions to the GMW Connections team locally which will help keep the project on time. I would suggest that you should be talking to your neighbours regularly about the future so that you are well prepared for when the Connections team visit. Some very 'tough' decisions are going to be made in the future so please be organised. We currently have several Strategic Connection Projects (SCPs) in progress with all to be commenced by the end of 2014 and finished by 2018.

The recent reforms in the water industry have been immense. Some more complex than others, and I applaud all our customers and GMW staff for their perseverance and tolerance in managing through these continually changing times.

Welcome to Joanne Stone, our new customer administrator. You can speak to Joanne at the front desk of the Kerang office.

On behalf of the Torrumbarry WSC I would like to wish customers a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Charlie Gillingham
Torrumbarry WSC Chair

Pumped District Update

If you are a pumped district customer register now for our SMS alert message system and stay up to date on flow interruptions. We will send you a text message when we need to shut supply to repair broken pipes or pumps and inform you of the date the service is expected to return.

Register for this service via WaterLINE online, simply log in, then under the 'User Options' tab, select the 'Communications Register' tab.

Through the WaterLINE 24 hour service you can:

- lodge irrigation orders
- communicate with our Water Delivery Consultants
- confirm irrigation start times
- view your Allocation Bank Account (ABA) balance (online only)
- monitor the available capacity in your outlet (online only)

- input your meter readings to better manage your accounts.

WaterLINE online enables you to order water and ensure you have sufficient allocation in your ABAs to cover usage. More information is available at www.g-mwater.com.au/customer-services/waterline

The screenshot shows the WaterLINE Online web interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Orders', 'Usage', 'FarmConnect', and 'User Options'. Below that, the main content area displays order details for 'Change Finish Time of Order 1209788'. It includes fields for 'Service Point: RNDG:2334A', 'Alloc Bank Account: ABA016652', 'Start Time: 10:00 02-Apr', 'Finish Time: 18:00 02-Apr', and 'Duration: 8.00 hrs'. There are also 'View Details' buttons. At the bottom, there are 'Lodge' and 'Abort' buttons.

Torrumbarry WSC contact details:

Charlie Gillingham (Chair)
0457 719 874

Margot Henty (Deputy Chair)
0427 506 604

Andrew Leahy
0408 500 875

Nathan Free
0427 178 626

Guy Duncan
0437 092 144

Paul Bethune
0439 508 757

Grant Davies
0427 372 718

Timothy McNeil
0427 570 215

Ann Hodge
0427 680 486

Growling Grass Frogs

Over the next few months you might spot small teams of frog investigators working around the channels and drains in the Kerang, Murrabit, Koondrook areas. They're conducting a hunt for the endangered Growling Grass Frog.

The frog investigators are environmental specialists from SKM who have been contracted by us to identify populations of Growling Grass Frogs.

You are likely to see the investigators scouring the channel banks at night time because this is when the frogs are most active.

For more information please visit www.g-mwater.com.au/environment or call 1800 013 357.



TORRUMBARRY IRRIGATION AREA

Gunbower Forest Construction Project

GMW commenced construction on a \$13.5million environmental project this year near the Gunbower Forrest.

The works, an initiative of North Central Catchment Management Authority, aim to provide large volumes of environmental flows to the flood dependent ecosystem of Gunbower Forrest.

GMW recognises the need to supply environmental flows to the forest for the benefit of:

- Red gum and Black Box tree health
- breeding opportunities for waterbirds, frogs and fish
- increased wetland areas
- more productive forest and better quality habitat for mammals and reptiles.

As the construction authority, GMW will complete:

- A one kilometre channel along Hipwell road to deliver environmental water from Gunbower Creek to Gunbower Forest (final stages of completion).
- A bridge where Island road crosses the Hipwell road channel (complete).
- Road approaches to the bridge (under construction).
- An offtake regulator and fish lock to control flows entering the channel (complete).

- A weir and fishway in Gunbower Creek to enable maximum inflow rates of 1600ML per day (final stages of completion).

Funding for construction is provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority through The Living Murray program.

More information and construction updates are available at www.nccma.vic.gov.au, just follow the link to Gunbower Forest Flooding for Life.



Murray Cod Spawning Story

Environmental flows on Gunbower Creek to stimulate Murray Cod breeding have proven successful with researchers finding Murray Cod larvae downstream of Cohuna.

The find is part of an intervention monitoring program conducted by GMW, North Central Catchment Management Authority and fish ecologists CPS to analyse whether environmental flows are beneficial and working correctly.

GMW played a critical role in this carefully planned process by stabilising irrigation flows so flow peaks and lows were obtained when required. Channel regulation also ensured the Cod didn't abandon their nests.

To further stimulate fish spawning a large bodied fish hydrograph was developed to mimic a natural flow event.

In mid November a light trap was used to test the program's results. The trap attracted and captured a sample of Murray Cod larvae, proving the advantages of environmental flows for natural fauna.

Pictured right is a 10 day old larvae found in the Gunbower Creek during the testing period. The larvae is not much bigger than the head of a matchstick.

Did you know? A Murray Cod's age is determined by counting the rings on the fish's otolith (a bone found behind the fish's ear). Each ring represents a day until they get to about 60 days. Once the fish is mature then each ring represents a year.



ROCHESTER-CAMPASPE IRRIGATION AREA

Rochester-Campaspe WSC Chair Message

Significant change has happened with GMW's staff and business structure and your Rochester-Campaspe Water Services Committee (WSC) have played an important part in this process and will continue to do so.

We are now well into a new season, unfortunately the delivery to date has seen our figures slightly down compared to the delivery this time last year. As the season progresses with a long hot dry summer predicted we believe that we will have the potential to end the season with a similar amount of water being delivered.

There has recently been some new staff appointed to the GMW Connections team locally which will help keep the project on schedule. As a Committee we have had some concerns with the outstanding Connections projects previously managed by Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) that are not covered within the new GMW Strategic Connections Project and have been working towards resolving these problems. Whilst there appears to be substantial progress in reviewing these cases the WSC still has some concerns in regard to the legal liability and guarantees that may occur within the construction of some of these Connection

projects.

The WSC have reviewed the Capital Works program from the 2013 winter, and accordingly have been able to view the up and coming plans for the next two years. The Committee wishes to explore opportunities for further rationalisation prior to replacement or renewal of these structures. We will continue to monitor the completion of the de-commissioning of the Campaspe Irrigation district as a Committee.

There has been discussion around resolving concerns with the legal liabilities in regard to the recreational use of the Greens Lake. We welcome the introduction of By-laws for managing the recreation area and will continue to review the Land on Water Management Plan suggestions through consultation with the local Corop community.

On behalf of the Rochester-Campaspe Water Services Committee I would like to wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas followed by a prosperous 2014.

Richard Anderson
Rochester-Campaspe WSC Chair

Rochester-Campaspe WSC contact details:

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Bruce Macague (Deputy Chair)
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Ron Brooks
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Eiril Rathjen
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LODDON VALLEY IRRIGATION AREA

Loddon Valley WSC Chair Message

Last season saw GMW deliver a record amount of water to customers within the Loddon Valley Irrigation Area for many years. At the end of the season customers had used 242,000 ML, with GMW being able to deliver this water at an efficiency of 83.5%. This was an increase of 2.9 % from the previous year. Once again, GMW will be looking to improve this for the current season.

With the high demand for irrigation water last season and at the start of this season, both your WSC and GMW are working together to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved in relation to the policies and procedures for irrigators.

While many of you are able to say that you have been through the GMW Connections 'experience', there are still some customers out there that have not yet started – but are to be contacted early in 2014. If you have any queries or questions, please contact a member of the WSC or GMW.

Our WSC has been working closely with

GMW in the development of service standards and Capital Programs which are to be undertaken during the 2013/14 winter capital works and also looking at structures for the 2014/15 capital program.

There has also been some confusion about the date that your GMW Fixed Charges Account is due to be paid. For Loddon Valley customer the due date is 16 January 2014. There have been changes undertaken within the water industry over the past 12 months and no doubt this will continue going forward. Please make sure that if you have questions surrounding these or that are in relation to, please contact your local WSC member or a staff member of GMW to help answer your query.

On behalf of the Loddon Valley WSC I would like to wish customers a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

John Nelson
Loddon Valley WSC Chair

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Murray Haw
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Loddon Water District WSC Chair Message

This summer will mark the 10 year anniversary since the commissioning of the Normanville pipeline. Despite some administrative issues, farms in the Normanville area have benefited greatly from the secure and reliable water supply provided by the pipeline system. The last 10 years would have been a lot more difficult without it. However with time things do start to age so I would encourage customers to take time to check all on farm tanks and troughs for leaks that may have appeared. I know we have had a few float valve problems on our farm that needed repairing.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank customers for continuing to use water from the system in a responsible manner. The pipeline continues to function exceptionally

well, with only minor problems during the past six months.

GMW are currently working on the dam fill run for Mitiamo and surrounds for January, so please let them know if there are any problems with the drains for this.

Work is currently being done on the proposed Mitiamo pipeline and we will keep you updated on any developments as the project progresses.

Have a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Grant Malone
Loddon Water District WSC Chair

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0419 521 000
Deidre Schlitz
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Geoff Thomas
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Carl Chamberlain
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Loddon Water Districts Update

Storage Tanks

If you are a pipeline customer, please remember that as part of your agreement you are required to have four days supply stored in a water tank on your property to ensure service standards are maintained. If you do not have adequate storage or have any questions relating to the agreement please contact GMW on 1800 013 357 to discuss options that may be available to you.

Access around pipeline

As part of your on farm safety and to reduce fire hazards, please clear grass and debris from around your domestic and stock meters. This will assist GMW staff with maintenance and meter readings and ensure you can also access these sites in a safe manner. Care needs to be taken when burning off as many meters, filters and valves can be damaged by fire.

Works around pipeline

Please contact GMW before you dig, excavate or drive fence posts in the vicinity of the East Loddon and Normanville pipelines.

If you are undertaking works in the vicinity of GMW assets please ensure you adequately locate the asset/s to ensure it is not damaged in any way. Costs associated with repairs to GMW assets resulting from private works will be recovered from the individual. For more information on asset locations prior to undertaking works please contact GMW on 1800 013 357.



East Loddon Pipeline pumps

LODDON-CAMPASPE GROUNDWATER & SURFACE WATER DIVERTERS

Loddon-Campaspe Regional WSC Chair Message

Three mid October frosts over a ten day period have caused severe damage to crops and horticulture through much of our northern Loddon-Campaspe region. It is hoped that some pockets of production have escaped the devastation and that producers can recoup some of their input costs.

With 100% allocation for surface and groundwater and full or near full farm dams in the upper catchments, irrigators have the opportunity to use their entitlement to make up for another dry spring.

The tariff review has been completed and the initial changes to charges and fees will hopefully begin next financial year, subject to ESC approval. The aim of the review was to have a revenue neutral outcome whilst trying to ensure each customer was paying only for the cost of their particular service. Unfortunately, there will be some customers who will see an increase in their costs. The Board and GMW management continue to focus on minimising cost increases.

As Chairman, I have been concerned as to whether our WSC is meeting the consultative demands of our customers with GMW. I believe a model which possibly dissolves

the current committee structure and reforms new committees to formally meet with GMW may provide more localised input and give greater ownership of the consultative process than what is presently occurring. Eg. Surface water committee of Loddon- Campaspe, Mid-Loddon Groundwater Committee, Unregulated Surface Water in the Upper Catchments.

The Loddon Campaspe Regional WSC is keen to hear thoughts and ideas on areas where improvement can be made. Please contact your local WSC representative to discuss further.

I would like to thank Russell McKay for his considerable efforts over a 20 year period in representing the Southern Catchment. Russell has been a fearless advocate in protecting customer interests and has been a valuable ally during this time.

On behalf of the Loddon-Campaspe WSC, I would like to wish all customers a happy, safe and restful Christmas and hope that Santa calls.

Alan Rothacker
Loddon Campaspe Regional WSC Chair

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William O'Connell
03 5424 1395
Thomas Walsh
0427 241 820

Access to Pump Sites

Customers are reminded of the need to maintain safe access to pump sites to ensure the safety of GMW employees and those accessing works. Access tracks to meters and pump sites need to be maintained in order to minimise the likelihood of injury. Your cooperation in ensuring sites are clear of debris and hazards is greatly appreciated.

Groundwater Update

Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) and Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA

The Loddon Highlands WSPA and the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA Groundwater Management Plans have been successfully implemented over the past 12 months. The Consultative Committees responsible for the development of the Plans have been appointed as Groundwater Reference Committees. GMW will meet with each of the committees annually to report on Plan implementation and consider any need to review the Plans.

Metered groundwater usage in both WSPAs was higher than the previous two seasons; which is likely due to the drier conditions and timing of rainfall events.

Mid-Loddon Groundwater Management Area

The Mid-Loddon Groundwater Management Area (GMA) Local Management Rules have continued to operate successfully. Metered groundwater use in the Mid-Loddon GMA saw an increase from recent seasons and was 51% of licence entitlement in the 2012/13 season. The Mid-Loddon GMA Groundwater Reference Committee met in September 2013 to discuss our current resource position and any need to review the Rules.

No changes were proposed to the Rules, however a more comprehensive review of the Rules is to commence at the end of the 2013/14 irrigation season.

Central Victorian Mineral Springs Groundwater Management Area

The Central Victorian Mineral Springs GMA Local Management Plan was implemented in July 2013. The Plan was developed in consultation with a Groundwater Reference Group comprising customers, community members and agency representatives. The Central Victorian Mineral Springs GMA extends from Daylesford and Woodend in the south to Maldon and Redesdale in the north including parts of the upper Loddon and upper Campaspe catchments. The Plan provides groundwater users and the local community with information about the groundwater system and rules describing how the resource is managed.

Management Plans, annual reports and graphs showing groundwater levels for Groundwater Management Units are available at www.g-mwater.com.au

CENTRAL GOULBURN IRRIGATION AREA

Central Goulburn WSC Chair Message

A large volume of water has been used in Central Goulburn as a promising winter disappointed by folding up in the spring. On a personal note, this included a record 500+ consecutive hour order being delivered. While at times we curse the workload and the costs associated with irrigation, at least we are fortunate enough to have the option. The new Central Goulburn Customer Service Centre has opened at Kyabram. Those customers closer to Tatura can still be serviced at the Main Office, but hopefully by being based in a more central location like Kyabram, more customers will have the opportunity for direct personal contact with GMW.

The Strategic Connections Project is progressing. A special team which includes former Central Goulburn Manager, Greg Shannon, has been created that will prioritise cleaning up legacy issues that have evolved over time. In addition to this, the number of Modernisation Co-ordinators has been doubled, with four to be based at Tatura and four at Kyabram. Irrigators need not be concerned that these extra employees will add to their costs, as they will be funded by

the Modernisation Program.

The duties of the Water Services Committee have been expanded to include those of the former Modernisation Committee and following a small number of concerns by irrigators with the new system, we are closely monitoring any issues arising and presenting them to GMW. We feel it is important to get on top of these teething issues before we get too far down the implementation track, in order to minimise cost impacts in the future.

The chances of getting a low security allocation have diminished with the dry spring and below average inflows, but subject to rainfall, remain reasonable for the autumn. I have been informed by GMW that, at the time of writing, another two months of average inflows are required.

On behalf of your Water Services Committee, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and hopefully, a wetter New Year,

Peter Hacon
Central Goulburn WSC Chair

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Ross Crawford
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Ray Sellwood
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Murray McDonald
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Douglas Costello
0408 335 780

Peter Costello
0437 741 929

Jennifer Savage
0418 381 318

NOW OPEN

Your new Kyabram Customer Service Centre is now open and our customer service staff are waiting to help you with all your enquiries. If you are a customer close to Tatura you can still visit the 40 Casey Street office for your customer enquiries. Alternatively, you can arrange a meeting with your local Customer Relationship Coordinator at a time and place convenient to you by calling 1800 013 357.

Kyabram Customer Service Centre NOW OPEN 79 McCormick Road, Kyabram, 3620



SHEPPARTON IRRIGATION AREA

Shepparton WSC Chair Message

The benefits of the modernised irrigation system have been obvious with increased demands due to the dry conditions last irrigation season. GMW delivered a ten year high amount of water to Shepparton customers last season. Many channels were up to capacity, and the system performed well under pressure. The 24 hour ordering system has become a beneficial part of modernised irrigation system and customers are encouraged to plan their irrigations in advance to ensure they avoid the peak demand periods due to capacity restraints.

The Shepparton East Modernisation project commenced during the winter months with all regulators and some outlets being installed along the backbone. The weather was conducive for works being completed ahead of time, allowing for channels to be filled in time

to provide water for frost control at the start of the irrigation season. The Connections unit will be addressing the non-backbone areas in Shepparton East in 2015 and customers in this area will not be contacted until 2015.

The future Capital Works program for the Shepparton area has been reviewed and approved by the committee. GMW is keen on having WSC members input on prioritising the capital works program and I see this as a good initiative.

On behalf of the Shepparton WSC, I would like to wish customers a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

David Irvine on behalf of Craig Reynolds
Shepparton WSC Chair

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Alan Strang
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Kevin Minogue
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TUNGAMAH WATER DISTRICT

Tungamah Water District WSC Chair Message

I would like to take the opportunity to thank customers for continuing to use water from the system in a responsible manner. The pipeline continues to function exceptionally well, without many problems at all. If customers discover a leak in the pipeline please contact the Shepparton office on 58227900 to report it.

I would also encourage customers to keep a record of your yearly usage to ensure you do not use more water than you are entitled to.

Customers working near the pipeline, for example erecting new fences, are encouraged to contact the Shepparton Office for a pipeline location to avoid the risk of damaging the pipeline.

I also take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year

Rod Squires
Tungamah Water District WSC Chair

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Neville Ludeman
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Geoff Mills
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Laurie Whinray
0409 408 299

Bill O'Connor
03 5833 9294

Tungamah Water Districts Update

Storage Tanks

If you are a pipeline customer, please remember that as part of your agreement you are required to have four days supply stored in a water tank on your property to ensure service standards are maintained. If you do not have adequate storage or have any questions relating to the agreement please contact GMW on 1800 013 357 to discuss options that may be available to you.

Access around pipeline

As part of your on farm safety and to reduce fire hazards, please clear grass and debris from around your domestic and stock meters. This will assist GMW staff with maintenance and meter readings and ensure you can also access these sites in a safe manner. Care needs to be taken when burning off as many meters, filters and valves can be damaged by fire.

Works Around Pipeline

Please contact GMW before you dig, excavate or drive fence posts in the vicinity of the Tungamah pipeline.

If you are undertaking works in the vicinity of GMW assets, please ensure you adequately locate the asset/s to ensure it is not damaged in any way. Costs associated with repairs to GMW assets resulting from private works will be recovered from the individual. For more information on asset locations prior to undertaking works please contact GMW on 1800 013 357.

GOULBURN–BROKEN GROUNDWATER & SURFACE WATER DIVERTERS

Goulburn-Broken Regional WSC Chair Message

Hello everyone and welcome to the last newsletter for the year.

It is good to have a full allocation of water for use if required at the start of spring and to be able to plan and implement summer cropping programs. We have suffered from drought, fire and flood over the past few years and now the latest to affect some of our farming community has been an unusual late frost, which has done untold damage to what had promised to be a good cereal harvest. We hope next year is better for them.

At our next meeting the Committee will be fully briefed on the Shepparton Groundwater Management Plan, as well as the Broken River Sustainability Plans and be given an update on the Diverters Tariff Strategy.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority is holding discussions regarding the Murray Darling Environmental Plan; this is going to affect all landholders through-out the basin from the top to the bottom. In the Goulburn system, using McCoys Bridge as the lower

end gauge, they would like to see a (man-made) flood of 40,000 mega litres per day to water trees and for the benefit of fish. I would maintain that this is far too high and may mean that the Loch Garry Floodway would have to operate, flooding thousands of hectares of land. At this time of year many landholders would lose their entire annual income. I can visualise the legal fraternity having a field day. More work has to be done on this program under natural conditions and without the hysteria of the so called 'environmentalists' (please note these are my personal views and do not necessarily reflect the views of the committee as a whole).

Christmas is fast approaching, so may I, on behalf of my family and the Water Services Committee, wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. Above all, if you are travelling, stay safe.

See you next year.

Morris Brown
Goulburn Broken Regional WSC Chair

Groundwater Update

Shepparton Irrigation Region Groundwater Supply Protection Area Groundwater Management Plan

It is now widely recognised by groundwater managers, customer groups and other stakeholders, that the current Groundwater Management Plan for the shallow groundwater resources of the Shepparton Irrigation Region is out of date and in need of replacement. It is proposed that a new Local Management Plan will be developed to facilitate a lower intensity management approach, which is commensurate with the fragmented and opportunistic nature of the shallow groundwater resources in the Shepparton Irrigation Region.

Consequently GMW has written to the Minister for Water to propose that the existing Management Plan be revoked, so

that a process to develop a non statutory Local Management Plan can commence. The Minister has advised GMW that he is supportive of the proposal to replace the existing plan and a Notice of Intent has been published in local newspapers across the Shepparton Irrigation Region. Submissions on the proposed revocation are invited and should be lodged prior to 6 January 2014, addressed to:

*Shepparton Irrigation Region GSPA
Patrick O'Halloran
Groundwater and Licensing Branch
Department of Environment and Primary Industries
Level 10/8 Nicholson Street
Melbourne Vic 3002*

Indicative timeframes suggest that a new plan can be developed and consulted by December 2014.

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Alexander MacKenzie
0477 552 426

Access to Pump Sites

Please remember that you need to maintain safe access to pump sites to ensure the safety of GMW employees and those accessing works. Access tracks to meters and pump sites need to be maintained in order to minimise the likelihood of injury. Your cooperation in ensuring sites are clear of debris and hazards is greatly appreciated.

Upper Goulburn GMA and Strathbogie GMA

The Upper Goulburn Groundwater Management Area (GMA) and Strathbogie GMA Local Management Plans were implemented in July 2013. Each of the Plans were developed in consultation with Groundwater Reference Groups comprising customers, community members and agency representatives. The Plans provide groundwater users and the local community with information about the groundwater system and rules describing how the resource is managed.

The Upper Goulburn GMA extends from Kinglake and Marysville in the south to Eildon in the East and Alexandra in the north. The GMA includes the Rubicon River, Acheron River, Yea River, King Parrot Creek and Upper Goulburn River catchments.

The Strathbogie GMA extends from the Strathbogie Ranges in the south east to Violet Town in the north and Nagambie in the west. The GMA includes the upper and middle Sevens Creeks, Hughes Creek and Honeysuckle Creek catchments.

Mid Goulburn GMA

A Local Management Plan is proposed to be developed for the Mid Goulburn Groundwater Management Area (GMA) during 2013 and 2014. The GMA extends from Nagambie in the south to Wunghnu in the north and includes the towns of Shepparton, Murchison and Tatura. The Local Management Plan will be developed in consultation with groundwater users, community members and key stakeholders. Background technical work to support the development of the Plan is underway and community consultation and Plan development is expected to commence in early 2014.

MURRAY VALLEY IRRIGATION AREA

Murray Valley WSC Chair Message

This season has seen Murray Valley start with a new measuring device at Yarrowonga, the old knife edge has been replaced with flume gates, and this is the start of automation into Murray Valley. The process now is to automate all the backbone regulators. This will take time but will provide a better service to all irrigators.

Significant change has happened with GMW's staff and business structure and your Water Services Committee (WSC) have played a part in this to date, and this relationship will continue into the future. Discussion about capital works for Murray Valley, continual review of water plan budgeting, drainage review and ground water are included in our discussions with GMW.

This spring hasn't been as difficult as it could have been to date. This is a good example of the need to have efficient and cost effective irrigation in our area, which is a big advantage over other areas growing the same produce. The dams are full and so far have spilled 85% out of spillable water accounts. Hopefully a low reliability allocation will be announced by February. The temporary water market price and availability is a constant talking point at WSC meetings.

The big issue facing Murray Valley and all irrigators is Modernisation and the Connections Project. As a committee we struggle to assist with the direction of the Connections process. Strategic Connections Project (SCP) meetings are happening on a bimonthly basis; usually three to four SCPs each period. Some Irrigators are still noting lack of consultation and communication as an ongoing issue. If Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) can improve this, then the Connections Project will transition smoother.

The positive is more staff have been employed and trained, so more SCP's can get started. Some experienced staff has been assigned roles working through any legacy cases. If anybody has any concerns please contact GMW or committee members.

The next six months will see some infrastructure changes in Murray Valley with the finalisation of SCP's that have been in progress for twelve months now. If Irrigators are having any trouble with planning, design or the Connections Project please contact WSC committee members or GMW Cobram office.

Murray Valley WSC contact details:

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Kevin Whatman
0427 772 818

I wish to thank Barry Croke for his service to the Murray Valley customers during his time as a valuable member of the WSC. Barry has decided to retire from the committee and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

On behalf of Murray Valley WSC, I would like to wish everybody a safe and Merry Christmas.

Jason Andrew
Murray Valley WSC Chair

MURRAY NORTH-EAST GROUNDWATER & SURFACE WATER DIVERTERS

Ovens, King & Mid Murray RWSC Chair Message

Fellow irrigators,

On behalf of your Water Services Committee, and as your chairman, in the last year we have been placing huge amount of emphasis on GMW to reduce the water licence costs imposed on irrigators.

We have numerous irrigators phoning concerned they cannot afford to keep paying for irrigation licence water, particularly ground water and some surface water, when they are not utilising the water and cannot find a profitable crop to grow.

We believe, by working with the new board of GMW, that future costs should stabilise, and hopefully do not increase.

At future Water services Committee meetings one of the agenda items is to formalise the way forward for Ovens and King's trading rules. We know it's not beneficial to see water traded out of the Ovens and King, as these two valleys are very versatile with rich productive soil. It is also very important to this region to retain our irrigation water because with security of water there is always potential for communities to grow. However, because of the small storage capacity of Lake William Hovell and Lake Buffalo and the restrictive nature of entitlement it is very important that there is no further impact on the security of irrigator's water, if trading of water is implemented.

In this current season it is important that you order your spill reliability water and

then continually order water throughout the season.

I would like to thank Walter Sartori for the 15+ years he has represented the King River Catchment in a selfless and dedicated manner. Walter has been a strong advocate for the customers in this area as both a Committee Chairperson and member, and has been of great assistance to me and the Committee in general.

On behalf of the Ovens/King/Mid Murray committee we wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Malcolm Carson
Ovens, King & Mid Murray RWSC Chair

MURRAY NORTH-EAST GROUNDWATER & SURFACE WATER DIVERTERS

Kiewa, Mitta Mitta & Upper Murray RWSC Chair Message

There has not been much of a visible change over the last 12 months for most irrigators in our region, but behind the scenes things are changing. GMW has had a massive cultural change since Christmas 2012 with a stronger customer focus.

Re-examination of every facet of the business, cutting red tape and reducing costs to irrigators who have licences over 50 ML will see significant reductions in pricing. This has occurred by a complete tariff review involving all the WSC Chairs and reviewed by your Committee.

The cost of transferring licences has significantly dropped along with the time

taken to process these transfers.

A ground water use review for all our valleys is currently being undertaken with the opportunity in 2014 for you to participate.

The weather again is not 'normal' with very little rain in October and November; let's hope that we have a good autumn.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Peter Serpell
Kiewa, Mitta Mitta & Upper Murray RWSC
Chair

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Peter Antonello (Deputy)
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Rodger Broderick
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Sid Dalbosco
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Malcolm Lumby
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Raymond Park
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Groundwater Update

Upper Ovens WSPA Water Management Plan

Research to inform a future review of the Upper Ovens Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) Plan is underway. Implementation of this water balance research includes installation of a surface water gauge and a groundwater monitoring bore at Buffalo Creek near Myrtleford; both of which will be monitored until 2015 when a management plan review will occur.

Katunga WSPA Groundwater Management Plan

The Katunga Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) Groundwater Management Plan was reviewed by GMW in November 2011. The review concluded that the Plan has worked well since its development in 2006, but that some changes should be considered to improve the current groundwater management arrangements. Amendments to the plan require the Minister for Water to first appoint a Consultative Committee. This committee will consider amendments and make recommendations to the Minister. If the Minister for Water endorses the need to amend the plan then the process to consider amendments is scheduled to begin early in 2014.

New Kiewa and Upper Murray GMA Local Management Plans

The development of Local Management Plans for the Kiewa Groundwater Management Area (GMA) and Upper Murray GMA is underway. A customer survey and public meeting have been undertaken to gain an understanding of concerns and values within both GMAs.

The Kiewa GMA covers the Kiewa River catchment extending from the Bogong High Plains to Wodonga.

The Upper Murray GMA extends from the Victorian Alps to the Murray River including the Mitta Mitta, Corryong and Indi catchments and the townships of Omeo, Tallangatta and Corryong.

Local Management Plans will be developed in consultation with groundwater users, community members and agency representatives. Draft plans are expected to be developed by early 2014.

Management Plans, annual reports and graphs showing groundwater levels for Groundwater Management Units are available at www.g-mwater.com.au

Kiewa, Mitta Mitta & Upper Murray RWSC contact details:

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Doug Paton
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Brooke McKimmie
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Steve Rigoni
0418 436 993

Mac Paton
0417 063 304

Access to Pump Sites

Please remember that you need to maintain safe access to pump sites to ensure the safety of GMW employees and those accessing works. Access tracks to meters and pump sites need to be maintained in order to minimise the likelihood of injury. Your cooperation in ensuring sites are clear of debris and hazards is greatly appreciated.



Water Safety

GMW e-services

Our expanding range of web, email and mobile phone services ensures everything you need is the click of a button away.



Irrigation e-news:

Determination and Irrigation updates emailed to you once a month. *Sign up at www.g-mwater.com.au/subscribe*



e-dams: Water storage levels emailed to you daily, weekly or monthly. *Sign up at www.g-mwater.com.au/subscribe*



SMS Allocations:

Allocation announcements sent direct to your mobile phone. *Sign up through your WaterLINE online log in.*



SMS Start/Stop:

Reminders of when your water order will start and stop. *Sign up through your WaterLINE online log in.*



Online Payments: To pay your GMW account please visit our website at www.g-mwater.com.au



WaterLINE: WaterLINE online offers additional features such as the ability to view spare channel capacity and adjust flow rates and duration, all with 24 hour, 7 days a week convenience.

Your recreational enjoyment of water is important to us and so is your safety. Irrigation channels are dangerous and are not safe to swim in. Channel levels and regulator gates can change suddenly while pipes, siphons, rocks and debris can be hidden below the surface.

Stay safe and please don't enter or play in irrigation channels. Swim and enjoy water sports with care in our storages. To check for blue-green algae warnings, the latest water storage levels and boating regulations go to www.g-mwater.com.au

Fixed and Variable Charges Accounts

Customers who have chosen not to pay by four instalments are reminded the in-full payment date for Fixed Charge accounts is 16 December 2013 (with the exception of Loddon Valley Irrigation Area, Normanville, East Loddon and West Loddon Water Districts which is 16 January 2014). If you have misplaced your account and require a copy, please call us on 1800 013 357.

Variable Charge accounts will be issued in March (interim account) and June (final account) to recover the actual cost of delivering your water from our water storages.

Making payments

The following options are available:

BPay: Quote Biller Code 72801 and the GMW reference number.

Credit cards: Pay by calling 1300 558 729 and follow the prompts. There is a merchant fee for this service.

Mail: Detach the bottom portion of your account and mail to GMW, PO Box 165, Tatura, VIC 3616.

Australia Post: Present the account to any Australia Post Office or Post Office Agency.

Direct debit: Contact GMW on 1800 013 357 for an application to have your nominated Bank Account automatically debited.

In person: Present this account at our Tatura or Shepparton Offices. Pay by cheque, credit card or EFT. Cash is not accepted.

Hardship

Should you be experiencing financial hardship it is important you contact GMW on 1800 013 357 to discuss options that may be available to assist you.

Maintenance On Your Property Can Cost You

If you are undertaking maintenance works on your property please take care around GMW assets. Any cost associated with a damaged

asset that could have been avoided will incur a cost to the customer.

Domestic and Stock Dams

Are you planning to construct a new dam? Are you planning alterations to an existing dam? Please remember you must register all new dams. An application is also required prior to

undertaking alterations to existing dams in rural residential zones and on properties less than eight hectares.

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If you notice any channel leaks, weeds on channels, asset damage or vandalism on or around GMW structures or channels please report it to GMW on 1800 013 357 or the GMW 24hr emergency number on 1800 064 184.

GMW contact numbers

GMW Tatura

40 Casey Street, Tatura 3616
P: 1800 013 357
F: (03) 5826 3334
E: reception@g-mwater.com.au
Office Hours
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Monday to Friday

Your local Customer Service Centres

(Office hours 8.00am - 4.45pm, Monday to Friday)

Cobram Office

Dillon Street, Cobram 3644

Wangaratta Office

Murrell Street, Wangaratta 3677

Shepparton Office

21 Wheeler Street, Shepparton 3630

Kyabram Office

79 McCormick Road, Kyabram 3620

Rochester Office

41 High Street, Rochester 3561

Pyramid Hill Office

24 Barber Street, Pyramid Hill 3575

Kerang Office

78 Kerang-Koondrook Road, Kerang 3579