

Start of Season Newsletter

2016/17



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August 2016

Message from the Interim Managing Director

As most of you would have read, I've been seconded to the role of Interim Managing Director at GMW for a period of up to four months. My substantive position is that of Managing Director at Western Water and I have worked for more than 30 years in the water industry.

I'm looking forward to the challenges this role presents and as the Interim Managing Director, I will be making decisions to keep the business moving forward within the strategic parameters set down by the Board.

One of the Board's directions for me is to continue driving efficiencies from the business. This is a key part of keeping prices stable for our customers. I'm also working with the Project Control Group as it makes a decision on the future delivery of the Connections Project.

I wanted to take this opportunity to talk through some of the important projects we're currently working on that are improving services for our customers.

During this year's winter shutdown we desilted about 250km of channels across all irrigation areas – that's 130km more than usual.

We did this because we heard, in our 2015 customer survey, that a reliable water supply was the highest service expectation of GMW. Our desilting program ensures better flow rates and returns design capacity in our channels.

During this financial year we'll be spending more than \$40 million on capital works. Our capital works program allows us to renew priority assets on our channel system and



Interim Managing Director, Neil Brennan

meters for our diversion services, as well as undertake major upgrades to some of our storages.

You may also have already read about the recent changes we've made to create more flexible payment options on our fixed charges accounts.

We now offer an eight payment option that allows customers to pay smaller amounts over a longer period of time. We have also doubled the early payment discount from two to four per cent, for 2016 bills.

We're very much aware of the challenges our customers are facing this year and this is why we're committed to doing everything we can for our customers.

While the start of the inflow season has been positive, we know there's still a long way to go and it's why our new payment options and our commitment to driving efficiencies from our business remain a top priority.

Finally – I would like to reiterate the high level of importance I put on engaging with our customers. We are actively looking at how we can improve our communication with our customers and we will be talking to you about this and the future directions of the business in the near future.

Neil Brennan
Interim Managing Director

Innovative facelift for Tea Garden Creek Weir

An innovative upgrade of the Tea Garden Creek Weir will ensure irrigation and stock and domestic water continues to flow to the Wangaratta region.

The upgrade - undertaken by our own works teams - not only extended the weir's life by approximately 30 years, it also saved about \$1.25 million compared with the cost of replacing the weir.

The weir was established in the Ovens River in the 1960s to supply irrigation and stock and domestic water down the Tea Garden Creek.

When it was identified remediation works were needed at the Tea Garden Creek Weir, we saw an opportunity to not only extend its life, but to change the weir's operation to make it easier and safer for our work teams.

We quickly realised a rebuild wasn't needed because the core was sound, so we got to work identifying a way of remediating the structure - which included some underwater work.

Through innovative thinking, we've made financial savings and achieved a stronger and safer structure.

All materials used were non-toxic and safe to use in water and we used professional diving services, which ensured the Ovens River flowed freely throughout the program supplying Wangaratta town water and environmental flows.

On top of this river banks were undisturbed, meaning minimal disturbance to the ecosystem.

The combined efforts of many teams across GMW promoted a successful outcome to this multi-disciplinary project.



Do we have your mobile number and email address?

To help us contact you quickly and cost effectively in case of an incident, service interruption or when you need to know important information, it's critical we have your current mobile number and email address. You can provide us with your mobile number and email address by visiting our website:



[www.gmwater.com.au/
updateyourdetails](http://www.gmwater.com.au/updateyourdetails)
or



phone 1800 013 357

Goulburn-Murray Water protects your privacy by collecting and handling your personal information in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic). For further information, please refer to our Privacy Policy at www.gmwater.com.au/privacy

Strong inflows continue

GMW continued to record strong inflows into its storages during July.

A total of 362.8 GL of water flowed into Lake Eildon during July, compared to 80.8 GL in the same month last year.

The July inflows mean a total of 562.0 GL has flowed into Eildon this calendar year, compared to an average total of 522.3 GL, (from January to the end of July).

GMW's Manager Water Resources, Dr Mark Bailey said when looking at these figures it was important to understand the average yearly (January to December) inflows into Lake Eildon were 1,457.8 GL.

He said while we've experienced an increase in inflows in the last three months, there was still a long way to go.

July to October is the peak inflow period into GMW's storages and GMW will continue to monitor weather conditions, inflows and responses in our catchment.

Inflows into the Loddon, Campaspe and Bullarook systems are tracking between average and dry conditions, while the Murray,

Goulburn and Broken systems are tracking between wet and average.

Under average conditions – when inflow volumes are expected to be greater in 50 years out of 100 – seasonal determinations in all systems will reach 100 per cent in late spring.

Above average inflows have also occurred in Lake Buffalo and Lake William Hovell.

During July this year, 134 GL flowed into Lake Buffalo, compared to 26 GL during the same month last year. This July, 61.8 GL has flowed into Lake William Hovell compared to 16.2 GL in July last year.

GMW encourages all entitlement holders to use the Northern Victoria Resource Manager's outlook and understand weather information when planning their 2016/17 water needs. For more information visit www.nvrm.net.au

Storage	July inflows 2016 (GL)	July inflows 2015 (GL)	January 2016 to end of July 2016 inflows (GL) (7 months)	Average Jan to end of July inflows (GL) (7 months)	Average annual inflows (Jan-Dec) (GL) (12 months)
Lake Eildon	362.8	80.8	562.0	522.3	1,457.8
Lake Nillahcootie	16.5	1.1	20.5	21.0	59.0
Lake Eppalock	28.2	0.3	32.9	56.8	159.3
Cairn Curran Reservoir	18.7	0.3	21.0	42.0	114.0
Tullaroop Reservoir	3.0	0.2	3.3	18.0	56.0
Lake Buffalo	134.0	26.0	213.0	171.0	416.0
Lake William Hovell	61.8	16.2	105.1	74.0	186.0

Connections Project update

The Connections Project has seen some major developments and milestones recently.

The 2016 Winter Works program has just been completed. Connections Project staff and contractors have been working hard across the Goulburn-Murray Water Irrigation District to carry out \$47 million worth of works.

From May - August 2016, 20 kilometres of channel remediation at high loss sites was completed, up to 26 kilometres of pipelines were installed, channel automation was installed at 45 sites, and special project work at Box Creek Weir and Swan Hill were constructed. The ongoing meters installation program and various decommissioning works were also completed.

A focus on stakeholder and community consultation and engagement has continued. In July, the Minister for Water, the Hon. Lisa Neville released the Connections Project Community Consultation Report.

The report provided a summary of the recent Connections Project community consultation sessions. More than 300 people attended the sessions as part of the two-week consultation program, allowing them to provide feedback and expertise on the four delivery options for the project reset.

The consultation report has also been presented to the Connections Project Stakeholder Consultative Committee.

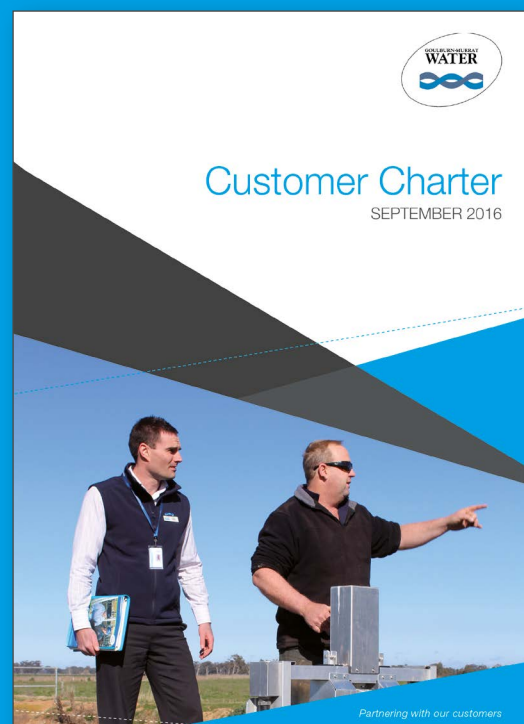
The report shows landowners strongly support 'Option 4' – a project delivery model that was announced as part of the project reset in June this year. This option provides for a channel-by-channel assessment and a fit-for-purpose approach to irrigation upgrades.

The release of the community consultation report is an important step in the Connections Project Reset process. A copy of the Connections Project Reset timeline, and the latest information on the project can be found on the Connections Project website at www.gmwconnectionsproject.com.au

2016 Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter provides important information about the rights and responsibilities of both our rural water customers and GMW. It sets the service standards customers can reasonably expect to receive and against which GMW's performance can be judged.

We review the charter each year to ensure we are achieving our objectives and that the information remains valid. The 2016 GMW Customer Charter will be available from our website and our Customer Service Centres in the coming weeks.





Helping you through difficult times

We understand that some of our customers are facing challenging times. That's why we're committed to doing all we can to support our customers.

If you're experiencing financial hardship, there are a number of ways we can help you manage your account and relieve some of the pressure you may be facing.

We know that every situation is unique and financial stress impacts our customers in different ways.

Regardless of whether you're experiencing temporary or long-term financial difficulties, we will work with you to find a solution to best suit your individual needs.

Together we'll develop a plan based on your circumstances to help you manage payment of your account.

You should have recently received your 2016/17 fixed charges account.

To help you pay your 2016/17 fixed charges account, we're this year offering retail customers the following options:

- Four per cent discount when you pay your 2016/17 fixed charges account in full by 16 September 2016 (previously the discount was two per cent).*

- Eight instalments of 12.5 per cent payable on the 16th of each month, starting on 16 September 2016, excluding January 2017, with final payment due on 16 May 2017 (previously we only offered four instalments). You can pay these instalments by direct debit for easy payment.
- Pay in full by 16 December 2016 (no discount).

These payment options were developed in response to feedback from our Water Services Committees to provide more flexible options to support customers during difficult times.

Other options we can offer include:

- flexible payment plans
- payment extensions
- direct debit instalments
- information about government pensioner concessions
- information about accredited financial and health support.

If you would like more information about our flexible payment plans, please call us on 1800 013 357.

*This option is not available to urban water corporations or environmental water holders.

**Talk to us at the
Elmore Field
Days Site 493**

**Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5 and
Thursday 6 October 2016**

Elmore Events Centre, 48 Rosaia Road, Elmore
For more information visit www.elmorefielddays.com.au

Customers encouraged to prepare for potential flooding

Some of Goulburn-Murray Water's storages are close to full and with catchment areas already wet and more rain forecast, there is a flood risk for the rivers and creeks upstream and downstream of the storages.

People living near rivers, creeks and storages need to monitor the situation and prepare themselves and their properties, according to their flood plan.

With August to October favouring above average rainfall, there is potential for flooding to occur in coming weeks and months.

The SES is advising that flood impacts may include river levels reaching the top of the bank or flow into

low-lying areas, local roads may be closed, low bridges may be underwater and caravan parks and camping areas may be flooded.

Farmers should be prepared to move pumps, machinery and livestock to higher ground if required.

If you need assistance preparing yourself or your property for a future flood event, visit www.ses.vic.gov.au/get-ready/your-local-flood-information. The Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) has developed localised flood guides and maps, which provide advice and information on how you can prepare.

For the latest warnings or emergency information go to the VicEmergency website at www.emergency.vic.gov.au or follow @vicemergency on Facebook or Twitter.

Quality of water provided by GMW

GMW is committed to providing information on the quality of water supplied to customers so they can make informed choices regarding their use of the water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (2003), GMW must also advise customers of the non-potable nature of water supplied by GMW.

GMW supplies raw (untreated) water for irrigation and stock and domestic purposes, and for bulk entitlement commitments. The quality of the water can vary due to a variety of factors such as algal levels, land uses, changes in flow, floods and drought.

Water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated. This includes water supplied at some of our facilities (e.g. parks adjacent to GMW reservoirs).

GMW works with catchment partners to identify ways of reducing the impacts of land use and development in catchments. This includes water quality monitoring, implementation of Land & On Water Management Plans and requiring that certain standards are met for developments. GMW's incident response procedures include the notification of customers and the general public in the event of poor water quality being detected.

GMW monitors its storages and supply systems for various water quality parameters, including nutrients, salinity and blue-green algae. This information is available by contacting reception on:

1800 013 357 or info@gmwater.com.au

Collective entitlement holders should advise their customers/users that the water supplied is non-potable, particularly if they run accommodation premises or food businesses, or if the general public has access to the water (e.g. through a public tap).

Spillable water accounts

Water entitlement holders in the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe systems can carry over water up to 100 per cent of their high and low reliability water shares.

Once the volume allocated through the seasonal determination process and water carried over from the previous season reaches 100 per cent of their water shares, any seasonal determination increases in these systems are recorded in an entitlement holder's spillable water account.

Spillable water accounts allow entitlement holders to use extra space in the storage above their entitlement volume when the space is not required.

The storage for the Murray system is Lake Hume, for the Goulburn system it is Lake Eildon and for the Campaspe system it is Lake Eppalock.

When storages are full, water is released downstream or 'spilled' to make way for inflows that will go towards new seasonal determinations.

Water held in spillable water accounts incurs an Above Entitlement Storage Fee; however, fees do not apply to water that spills. For the current Above Entitlement Storage Fee visit www.gmwater.com.au/feesandcharges

Risk of spill

On the 1st of July and the 10th of each month, the Northern Victoria Resource Manager (NVRM) assesses the chance of the storages in these systems spilling.

If the chance is less than 10 per cent, a low risk of spill is declared and the water held in spillable water accounts is returned to entitlement holders' allocation accounts.

Entitlement holders cannot use or trade water in their spillable water accounts until after the NVRM declares a low risk of spill.

A low risk of spill was declared in the Goulburn system on 1 July 2016.

The risk of spill in the Murray and Campaspe systems has increased over the past month due to continued wet weather and remains above the 10 per cent threshold.

The risk of spill in the Murray system is currently 90 per cent and in the Campaspe system the risk is 22 per cent. The risk of spill for these systems will be updated on Monday 12 September 2016.

Impact of a spill

If there is a spill before a low risk of spill is declared, entitlement holders will lose some of the water in their spillable water accounts. The amount they lose will be in proportion to the volume of the spill itself.

In the case of a major spill, it is possible to lose all spillable water. Any deductions for spills are advised with the seasonal determination announcement.

A spill only impacts spillable water accounts and has no impact on the volume available for trade or use in allocation accounts.

If a spill happens later in the season after a low risk of spill has been declared, it does not have any impact on the volume of spillable water that has moved into an allocation account.

For more information about spillable water accounts visit www.nvrm.net.au/risk-of-spill or www.gmwater.com.au/MurrayGoulburnCampaspecarryoverFAQ or phone our Customer Service Centre on 1800 013 357.

Stuart Murray Canal upgrade

Between May and August 2016, we undertook upgrade works on the Stuart Murray Canal, near Nagambie.

The \$1.9 million project, funded by GMW, strengthened a key drainage subway under the canal and increased the offtake structure's stability; ensuring the long-term reliable and safe supply of water to our customers. All works have now been completed and flows in the canal began on Friday 22 July and have been increasing to normal operational flows since then.

The upgrade included:

- Replacing a 100-year-old drainage subway with one that meets modern design standards, is safer and more reliable.
- Improving the canal's main offtake and decommissioning its vertical drive gates to better protect the water stored in the Goulburn Weir pool and Lake Nagambie.
- Maintenance on eight bridges crossing the canal to increase safety and stability.

The Stuart Murray Canal transfers water from the Goulburn River at the Goulburn Weir near Nagambie, through the rural areas around Murchison and Dhurringile, to the Waranga Basin near Rushworth. Along its length, the canal has six offtakes that supply parts of the Central Goulburn irrigation area.

The canal is critical for supply of the Waranga Basin, which delivers water to the Rochester and Loddon areas through the Waranga Western Channel.

You can read more about the project by visiting www.gmwater.com.au/stuarmurraycanal



The upgrade replaced the aging subway



The new subway meets modern design standards and is safer and more reliable



The offtake structure was stabilised and the vertical drive gates were decommissioned



The gates remain but have been reinforced with concrete

Upgrade at Tullaroop Reservoir

A \$10 million upgrade at Tullaroop Reservoir, funded by GMW, has strengthened the reservoir's main embankment; ensuring the long-term reliable and safe supply of water to farmers and local communities.

The nine-month upgrade project has also brought the main embankment in line with current Australian dam design and construction standards.

Carried out largely by our own management, technical and construction teams, the upgrade was extremely successful, being delivered well ahead of schedule.

Favourable weather and onsite efficiencies, such as using excavators fitted with GPS guidance, contributed to the project's early finish.

The excavators also provided environmental benefits. They were a hybrid system – meaning they used a third less fuel.

In addition, the upgrade contributed about \$3 million to local businesses and created about 30 jobs for local people.

We sourced all our rock, gravel and concrete locally as well as using local electricians, arborists and hardware suppliers.

Some of the roles associated with the project were highly specialised, requiring employees and contractors from other areas, who stayed in local accommodation.

We thank the community for their patience and understanding during the upgrade works. Their cooperation also contributed to us completing the upgrade ahead of schedule.

For more information about the upgrade visit www.gmwater.com.au/tullaroopreservoir



Stripping the existing dam surface and excavating the filter trench



The complete Tullaroop Reservoir upgrade



MyGMW – online services portal is now available

You can now access and manage your GMW account at your convenience, anytime and anywhere, through our new, secure online portal, *MyGMW*.

The new *MyGMW* online portal has been designed to make managing your account easier than ever.

You can now do a number of things online rather than having to come into our offices or phone our call centre.

MyGMW offers our customers the ability to:

- Submit a change of address or change of contact details request
- Submit a request for a special meter read
- Pay your account online with a credit card
- View the balance owing on your account
- Submit feedback

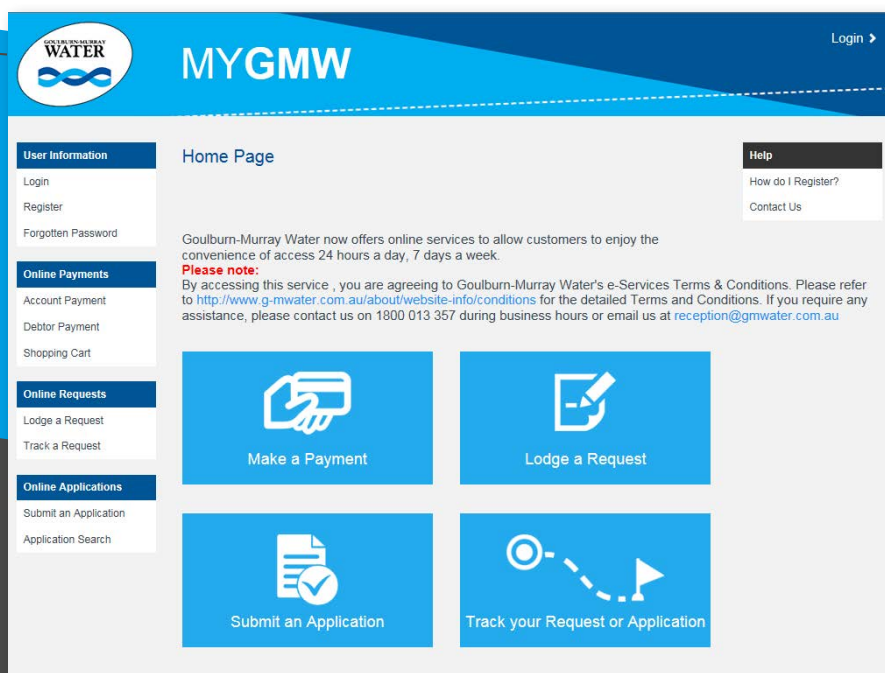
In addition, registered customers can also:

- Access a variety of property information including land parcels and properties
- See details of applications, requests and debtor accounts
- Review payment transaction details

You can access *MyGMW* from our website at www.gmwater.com.au. It's also smart phone compatible which means you can also use *MyGMW* on your smart phone.

We will continue to work with our Water Services Committees and use customer feedback to develop additional services to *MyGMW* over time, and we will keep you informed as the new features become available.

If you would like some help using *MyGMW* contact GMW on 1800 013 357 or visit your local Customer Service Centre.





Annual Water Services Committee (WSC) Workshop

Focusing on preparing for the future was a key theme at our annual Water Services Committee (WSC) workshop held in July.

About 60 WSC members attended the workshop in Moama, along with members of GMW's Board, Executive and staff.

This year's workshop aimed to identify the challenges facing our customers and provided an opportunity for members to have a say on how we tackle them in the future.

WSC members heard from our Board Chairman Sarah Scales, and Interim Managing Director, Neil Brennan on the year in review and looking forward.

Manager Water Resources, Mark Bailey provided a water resources update and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Executive Director of Rural Water Programs, Andrew Fennessy, gave a review of the State Government's draft *Water for Victoria* discussion paper.

In the afternoon, WSC members rotated through a number of round table sessions on topics such as the Connections Project reset, how we can improve WSCs communication and engagement, DELWP policy and our region's challenges.

The regional WSC committees, who represent diversions customers, had an extended workshop over one and a half days. The key topics covered included choice and flexibility and strategic planning. Work on choice and flexibility followed last year's workshop and is

essentially looking at ways to increase options for these customers in the management of their entitlements and licenses. Unbundling is one of those options and at the workshop, members focussed on the feasibility of this.

When asked what they enjoyed most about the workshop, WSC members said the collaboration among participants in the breakout sessions, attendance by DELWP, robust discussion and the opportunity to breakdown the bigger picture, meeting the GMW Board and staff, the diversions focus and the chance to network with fellow members.

The workshop included a dinner with guest speaker, Christine Nixon.

Ms Nixon is the former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police and has extensive experience in policing, organisational reform, risk and crisis management, emergency management and human resource management.

She spoke about the current challenges facing the water sector and stressed the importance of working together, respectful leadership, truly listening and being resilient.

Welcoming new WSC members

At the WSC Workshop, we also welcomed new members to our committees.

We caught up with our newest customer representatives to find out more about them and their plans for working with GMW. Read more about our members below.

Ruth McGrath, Central Goulburn WSC



Ruth is a Toolamba horticulturalist who joined her local WSC to keep up-to-date with regional business and water management issues and to keep other GMW customers informed.

She hopes to bring to the Central Goulburn WSC, her experience as both a customer and past GMW employee, to ensure robust and well-informed discussion with GMW and good interaction with customers.

Ruth likes to consult with the customers she represents through various contact with other customers when purchasing services from other irrigators or during social events and activities.

Affordable water availability and the provision of a safe and efficient water delivery system are some of the challenges that Ruth sees for the region going forward.

She said the future application of science and technology to production by innovative farmers and supported access to new, international markets is where the opportunities exist.

Ruth will continue to ensure access to easy-to-understand, timely and responsive services from GMW.

“I’m looking forward to being part of a small group of motivated customers with a genuine interest in working closely with GMW for the benefit of all customers,” she said.

Susan Wearden, Central Goulburn WSC



Susan is a Kyabram dairy farmer who joined her local WSC after being invited to attend a number of meetings as a guest and then being inspired to learn more and contribute by becoming a member.

Through the WSC, Susan hopes to gain an understanding of the parameters, decisions and operations carried out by GMW, along with an insight into the issues faced by GMW’s various stakeholders.

“I want to represent irrigators by providing both input and questioning into GMW’s planning and operations and in addition, I want to be able to provide informed feedback to stakeholders,” she said.

Susan usually consults with the customers she represents through general interaction at industry events and activities, and through her own farming networks.

She believes the challenges for agriculture in our region include the price, availability and delivery of water. Susan said these challenges also offer opportunities for future investment into our region.

“There are exciting times ahead to be both creative and innovative in our farming practices,” she said.

In addition to the WSC, Susan is the Chair of the Kyabram Dairy Business Network.

Susan said as part of her role as a WSC member, she is looking forward to exploring opportunities around delivering greater security to farmers for carryover water.



Bernice Lumsden, Torrumbarry WSC



Bernice is a third-generation farmer and is part of a family agriculture business that operates multiple dairies and has extensive beef and cropping outblocks.

As a large-scale dairy farmer, Bernice knows that water is critical to the success of her business and industry. Because of this, Bernice decided to join her local WSC to contribute to the sustainability of the future of water in the region.

Bernice hopes to contribute her farming knowledge to GMW and act as a voice between her community and the organisation to learn more about and improve the water system and delivery in the Torrumbarry district.

Bernice recognises that water is a massive challenge for agriculture, but also provides many opportunities.

“Obviously supply of a limited resource has become an issue over the last dry years. However the changes in the market place and unbundling require infrastructure management systems to be reviewed in order to maintain fairness and sustainability to the system,” she said.

“Water is a usable commodity that is now significantly traded. We need to ensure the delivery infrastructure costs of that deliverable commodity reflect the true use and purpose of the system - to grow food, and enable profitable agriculture.”

Bernice said through her business, she has committed to on farm efficiency agreements with NVIRP and achieved great outcomes.

“We were able to take a farm very difficult to irrigate to one that is now double cropped, achieving up to 30+ Dt/ Ha through maize and vetch rotational crops and we look forward to completing another such project around our main dairy,” she said.

Kyal Siebert, Torrumbarry WSC



During his 10 years' service with GMW, Kyal learnt much about irrigated agriculture in northern Victoria, both in an operation and a policy sense.

He felt he had learnt too much to let this knowledge go to waste, which is why he decided to join his local Water Service Committee, to continue making a contribution to the sector.

Kyal hopes to bring to the table “an unbiased view with a genuine desire to assist in helping create a sustainable future for irrigated agriculture in the area.”

“I have regular contact with many GMW customers and stakeholders and also through being a local and in my new role in the insurance industry,” he said.

“I have met a lot of people from all different industries within the irrigation industry and think that will be an asset when consulting on the various issues and getting a real view on what the irrigation community is thinking.”

Kyal believes there are many opportunities for a prosperous agricultural sector in northern Victoria.

“The opportunity is that there's plenty of good country that is still connected to a backbone that is developed and ready to produce when the circumstances are right - there is a massive opportunity to produce food and fibre from our region,” he said

Through his role as a WSC member, Kyal said he's most looking forward to being a part of the consultation process for the pipeline districts upgrade strategy.

CENTRAL GOULBURN WSC



A turn around in conditions promises a much better spring than in recent seasons and a far better outlook for allocations than predicted in autumn.

A similar outlook in NSW will hopefully take some pressure off the temporary market and reflect positively on prices.

The Central Goulburn (CG) WSC has had another busy year including opposing GMW's desire to change to a uniform pricing structure. Both Deputy Chair, Daniel Mongan, and I wrote submissions on behalf of Central Goulburn (CG) customers. These submissions can be read at <http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/document/water/27420-g-mw-price-submission/>. Unfortunately, the ESC's findings resulted in nobody getting their desired outcomes.

One positive to come out of the ESC's findings is that GMW will be required to pass on to customers more of their business efficiency initiatives which should see a stabilisation of customer prices in most areas.

The Connections Project has had another review and reset. I am currently representing CG customers on the Project Stakeholder Committee but, at the time of writing this, there is nothing new or any consequence to report. There are distinct different priorities within the Committee. Those holding the dollars are motivated by water savings, while those of us representing the irrigators are motivated by the efficiency legacies to the system and its customers.

I remain concerned over where the project will finish as it appears obvious that, due to previous waste, some customers will not be modernised and that a hybrid system may lead to inequities in service and efficiencies, plus an increase in maintenance as untouched infrastructure is brought put up to standard. All of this may have a negative impact on prices.

I remain hopeful that further funding may be found at a later stage to deliver the promised outcomes to communities of the GMID.

On a slightly sad note, I would like to, on behalf of CG customers, thank Ross Crawford for 17 years of dedicated representation. A truly likeable character, Ross has been a staunch advocate for the dairy industry throughout his tenure. As previous Chairman, he has set a high benchmark for me to try to maintain. We wish him well in the future.

With two vacancies on the committee, we welcome Ruth McGrath and Sue Wearden to fill these places. Ruth represents horticulture and has had experience in administration with GMW. Sue is stepping up to represent the dairy industry and I am confident that both of them will have quality input into the committee in the future.

There are many issues facing the irrigation community including; the volume of entitlement leaving the area and what impact this will have on the viability of the GMID, competition for water from almond development, delivery share revamp, carryover and low reliability entitlement. These items are but a few and are all topical.

The motivation behind WSC's membership is a desire to create better outcomes for the irrigation community we represent. As professional farmers we understand the impacts.

I urge all customers of GMW to go to public meetings and communicate with and support your committee representatives. Our voice gets heard, but it will only be as loud and carry as much weight as the number of people behind it.

The Water Services Committee is your voice!

Peter Hacon
Chair – Central Goulburn WSC

Central Goulburn WSC contact details:

Peter Hacon
(Chair)
0427 596 278

Daniel Mongan
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0409 490 369

Murray McDonald
0417 370 767

Ray Sellwood
0428 559 320

Stuart Young
0407 560 795

Greg Perry
0419 376 514

David Kerr
0438 531 150

Ruth McGrath
0438 034 477

Susan Wearden
0427 517 170

LODDON VALLEY WSC



We have seen substantial rain over the past two months fall across the district and storages -

boosting the water allocation for irrigators for this season.

From now (early August) it would seem that there will be a slow start to the irrigation season – but this is dependant on continuing rainfall and slightly cooler conditions than what we've seen in previous years.

For the third winter – GMW has continued to undertake a large de-silting program on a number of channels across the Loddon Valley area. A number of customers will have seen the benefits provided by undertaking this program to the channel supply and delivery of water to properties from past works. The work has been completed by a number of local contractors who have shown very good workmanship and also demonstrated value for money. Both GMW and the WSC are working together on raising issues and also producing solutions to this customer issues raised.

The Connections Project continues to be the main concern for local customers who are anxiously waiting

to update current on farm infrastructure so they can gain the benefits some other customers have had for some time. A number of community meetings were held, where the four reset options were presented and discussed by Connections staff and irrigators within the community.

The WSC will be working hard to make sure Loddon Valley customers get the best possible connection to suit their enterprise. It is hoped that the use of Option 4 will enable all Loddon Valley irrigators to be connected.

The WSC is available to help customers work through any connection problems.

John Nelson
Chair – Loddon Valley WSC

Loddon Valley WSC contact details:

John Nelson
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0427 543 447

Laurie Maxted
(Deputy Chair)
0428 551 332

Chris Harrison
03 5455 1251

Allan Mann
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Robert Moon
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MURRAY VALLEY WSC



The Murray Valley WSC has continued to develop in 2015/16, welcoming two new members in Rodney McCracken and Iwan Van Den Berg. Both are large-scale dairy farmers with a good understanding about the importance of irrigation and will be an asset to the committee. We would also like to recognise the retirement of Jim McKeown and Barry Croke from the committee. They both contributed time and effort over the years on behalf of the Murray Valley irrigators.

It is important that we get new members with enthusiasm and fresh ideas. If you would like to know more about our WSC please contact any of the members or GMW's Cobram office.

Over the past 12 months the committee has been involved in the planning proposal for Water Plan 4. A lot of discussion was held over single pricing and cross subsidy of districts. In June, the Essential Services Commission decided on a model of five districts with uniformed pricing and a single district (Shepparton) priced separately. Prices for Murray Valley irrigators will start to drop this season and we'll see further reductions by the end of Water Plan 4 (2020). The WSC also proactively worked with GMW to increase flexibility of account payments given the challenging economic environment in agriculture.

The Connections Project has played a big part in what we do each month, with the reset involving the Primary Agency producing a public document for government. Victoria's Minister for Water established a Project Control Group, who have put a lot of work into understanding what budget is 'committed' and 'uncommitted' and will release reset Option 4 in full detail in late August/early September.

Some customers have seen a positive step in the control of arrowhead in the 1, 3 and 4 channels and a big effort in desilting areas of the 5 and 6 systems will also result in improved levels of service. The Connections Project winter program continued with three pipelines, three plastic lined channels and a number of backbone meters installed this winter. Two major bridges are also being constructed as a part of the GMW capital works program. We as a committee think it is still

very important to achieve high service standard levels regardless of the seasonal inflows. Obviously the season looks very promising as far as allocations, with 51 per cent on the Murray at 15 August and storage dams gradually filling.

While the committee members have their own businesses to run, the commitment to WSC has been excellent. All the topics discussed are for the benefit of irrigators and the community. These can take time, and the efforts have rewards for Murray Valley.

On behalf of the WSC we would like to wish all irrigators a good season.

Jason Andrew
Chair – Murray Valley WSC



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ROCHESTER-CAMPASPE WSC



It will come as no surprise to you that we received high rainfall in July which is well above average and looks promising for the beginning of the 2016/17 Irrigation Season.

Our current determination on the Goulburn system is 46 per cent HRWS and 48 per cent on the Campaspe. We are hopeful that with further rain events this will steadily increase as time goes by. Approximately 27 GL of water was carried over from the 2015/16 season for the Rochester Irrigation District customers to use and the area delivered volumes in excess of 150 GL for the season.

The Connections Project Community Consultation Report was released by Minister for Water Lisa Neville on the 27 July 2016. This showed a general consensus that Option 4 was the best choice to complete the Connections Project and create a sustainable future for farmers in our region. I would particularly like to thank everyone who made their time available to attend the Community Consultation Sessions and offered their feedback, knowledge and expertise. I look forward to working closely with landowners and GMW in order to receive only the best outcomes for our region.

The 2016 winter capital works program saw the replacement of four subways along the Waranga Western channel, three occupational crossings and one

road crossing as well as 4km channel bank remodelling.

Our committee members were very pleased to be involved in discussions with GMW in regards to implementing some financial ease for landowners in response to the current dairy industry and climatic pressures and I encourage anyone who may be in hardship to discuss payment options with GMW.

Many thanks, to our retiring member Mr Ron Brooks, who has given a loyal 47 years of service to the committee. Ron has been a sounding board for many a farmer who have drawn on his local knowledge and problem solving skills. I wish him well for the future.

We look forward to a positive season this year and as WSC members we will continue to represent customers and provide advice and recommendations to GMW.

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Chair – Rochester-Campaspe WSC

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SHEPPARTON WSC



It only seemed like a few months ago that the prospect of a decent start of season allocation was only a pipedream. The thought of another dry season was on every irrigators mind.

How quickly things can change. The 15 August seasonal determination has the Murray system at 51 per cent allocation and the Goulburn system at 46 per cent.

The recent decrease in milk prices has resulted in many challenges facing the dairy industry and many of our customers. While these pressures are out of our control, GMW has introduced a number of options and greater flexibility for customers to pay their accounts. Also to further assist, GMW will not charge any interest on 2016/17 fixed charges for customers who enter into a payment arrangement.

The recently released ESC decision on the 5:1 pricing structure for GMW customers was difficult to fathom, especially if you are a Shepparton customer. As a committee we are committed to looking into what can be done over the next few years to decrease costs in areas but not to reduce service levels. If any customers have any thoughts or comments, please contact a member of the Shepparton WSC.

The committee currently has a couple of vacancies and I'd like to invite any customers who are interested in joining to contact a Shepparton committee member or David Irvine at GMW's Shepparton office.

Capital works over the winter period included works such as:

- A number of occupational crossings being done as well the replacement of two road culverts
- Remodelling of a number of channels, and grading of drain access
- EGM works consisting of:
 - » Removing larger trees and spraying of saplings
 - » Desilting sections which had become inundated with pond weed and caused major issues with overtopping

Kevin Minogue
Deputy Chair – Shepparton WSC

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TORRUMBARRY WSC



The Torrumbarry WSC has continued to evolve in 2015/16 welcoming two new committee members

in Bernice Lumsden from Leitchville and Kyal Siebert from Swan Hill.

The future of irrigation direction and advocacy is very strong in our region with the addition of both these members. I would like to thank Russell Robins for his valued contribution during his time on the WSC.

I am pleased the outlook is looking a lot more positive than expected at the beginning of the year, and hopefully this will aid in reducing pressure on all our irrigators and particularly the local dairy farmers with the recent changes in the industry. With the start of the season at 51 per cent allocation on the Murray system there are opportunities to take advantage of this water for productive use.

The Resource Manager recently informed us that inflow conditions in the last couple of months for the Murray are tracking between wet and average outlook.

Thanks to GMW staff for contacting those with entitlement in excess of their limits and making them aware of their options prior to July 1 2016, so there was less water lost as a result.

We are looking forward to the pending announcement regarding the Connections Project Mid-Term Review and the reset which will be released soon. We hope it will provide certainty for the irrigators.

For information on your accounts, water trading, entitlements, service point fees, carryover and spillable water, go to www.gmwater.com.au or phone the Customer Service Centre on 1800 013 357.

Locally winter works completed to date include:

- Connections - Box Creek Weir, some regulator automation in Swan Hill. Remediation works on the 2/1 channel at Leitchville, No1 at Mead, No3 at Cohuna, No4 at Myall, pipelines at Creamery Rd Swan Hill and the works on the interconnecting pipeline from the No10 to the No9 at Swan Hill.

- GMW works include significant desilting on the top of the No1 to improve services, structure refurbishment at Fish Point and Occupation crossing replacement at Horefield.
- Works continue at Fish Point Weir and Little Murray Weir, with increased river flows delaying completion

The committee looks forward to the start of this season, and the direction the next phase of the Connections Project, we would welcome any feedback from local irrigators.

Guy Duncan
Chair – Torrumbarry WSC

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OVENS/KING/MID-MURRAY REGIONAL WSC



2016 is shaping into a good season, it seems to be more like a normal winter.

There have been two floods already in the Ovens and King catchments with the most recent flood on 30 July 2016, classified as a major flood for the King River.

From 8 July to 7 August the combined river flow of the Ovens and King was 648,790 ML.

At the end of July, I attended a GMW workshop, where Resource Manager, Mark Bailey gave a presentation, giving us an excellent overview of the storage inflows and levels.

Mark had a map of Australia from the Bureau of Meteorology, showing where the rain has been falling, the majority had fallen in the Ovens and King catchments.

With government officials present, I had to make the point that it would be beneficial to enlarge Lake Buffalo Dam. It would give more security and sure up reliability for irrigators, allow more environmental flows and help

reduce blue-green algae in the Murray.

Our region doesn't have a lake available for yachting, rowing, water-skiing, house boats. It would be a huge boost for tourism.

Extra storage would also alleviate flood damage, easing the huge clean-up costs that farmers have.

All this flood water could be generating hydro-electricity.

Remember to order your spillage water and high reliability water as needed through the season.

Hoping you all have a good spring.

Malcolm Carson
Chair – Ovens/King/Mid-Murray Regional WSC

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GOULBURN-BROKEN REGIONAL WSC

Welcome to old fashioned winter – cold and wet!

GMW launched Watermatch – an important trading notice board, where unregulated and groundwater customers can post a notice to trade water.

During the year we had input into developing a state Groundwater Trading Policy, Water Plan 4, and the Choice and Flexibility Project.

The WSC toured the Lower Goulburn looking at issues around the MDBA Constraints Strategy.

We also oversaw the development of the Eildon and Broken Groundwater Management Plans – the last of the Goulburn Broken catchment.

Thank you to GMW staff for their support and input into the WSC and thank you also to members of the WSC especially David Scott, a retiring member.

Craig Madden
**Chair – Goulburn-
Broken Regional WSC**

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KIEWA, MITTA MITTA AND UPPER MURRAY REGIONAL WSC



Over the last 12 months the Regional WSCs have been exploring how to free up water trade in unregulated surface, and groundwater through a process called 'Choice and Flexibility'.

The main issue is security of supply to those not wishing to trade. So any freeing up must protect existing users.

Any trade will need to be tagged to its source, so if the source is restricted so will the end user.

If trade was to occur this could give people that were currently not using their licence some choice for temporary trade, long-term leasing, or permanent sale giving some much needed income. This could create some opportunities for budding young farmers to get

started, being able to lease both water and land. In addition, regulated irrigators in many years would see a value in unregulated surface water that would be available at the start of their season, and help them in low allocation years.

The problem is to always have the ability to allow water entitlements to return to its source when required.

If you would like know more and be involved in the discussion contact your WSC representatives that are listed in this newsletter.

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Chair – Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and Upper Murray RWSC

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LODDON WATER DISTRICTS



It's great to see some green growth around the district after what has been a near record dry period.

Having the secure water supply from the pipeline has meant we have not needed to cart water for livestock and this has provided a valuable backup for many household's domestic use as rainwater tanks ran dry last summer. While the blue-green algae didn't impact the Normanville pipeline, many customers just to the west were affected with the shortage of water to provide to stock or use for house needs.

The two pipelines continued to operate with a very reliable service during the previous 12 months, with very little leaks or issues that affected water supply to everyone.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank customers for continuing to use water from the system in a

responsible manner. The two pipelines continue to function exceptionally well during periods when demand has increased across the two areas. If you do experience any issues then please contact the GMW Customer Service Centre on 1800 013 357 to report the issue.

GMW are currently working towards a developing a business case for the Mitiamo and surrounding water districts – to investigate the feasibility of pipeline to provide stock and domestic water all year round service.

Grant Malone

Chair – Loddon Water Districts WSC

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LODDON AND CAMPASPE REGIONAL WSC



The 2015/16 irrigation season brought with it prolonged dry conditions that impacted much of the Loddon and Campaspe customer base. Our system storages suffered the impacts of unprecedented low inflows providing little relief; and ultimately only 8 per cent allocation in the Bullarook, 84 per cent in the Loddon, and 64 per cent in the Campaspe.

GMW's customers in these catchments have had to contend with the challenges of elevated temporary water market prices, as well as the ever present pressure of commodity prices; such as the downturn in the dairy industry. They have shown great resilience in testing times.

Similarly; groundwater resources have been tested over the last 12 months with little localised recharge reaching our key aquifers. The Newlyn zone of the Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area was allocated 75 per cent of licence volume, with all others in the west receiving their full seasonal determinations. We

are hopeful that recent rains will recharge the groundwater resources to bounce back from the final drawdown levels.

We have a long road to travel in terms of receiving full seasonal allocation in 2015/16, but I am buoyed by the return to somewhat normal conditions above our storages this winter. I also recognise the work undertaken by GMW in managing the resource and keeping customers informed.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their efforts throughout the year in helping represent the diverse customer base that exist within the Diversions Business. They are both passionate and committed to challenging processes and ensuring customer's needs are at the forefront of considerations. I encourage all customers to use them as a resource.

Andrew Maher
Deputy Chair – Loddon Campaspe Regional WSC,
on behalf of Chair Norm Suckling

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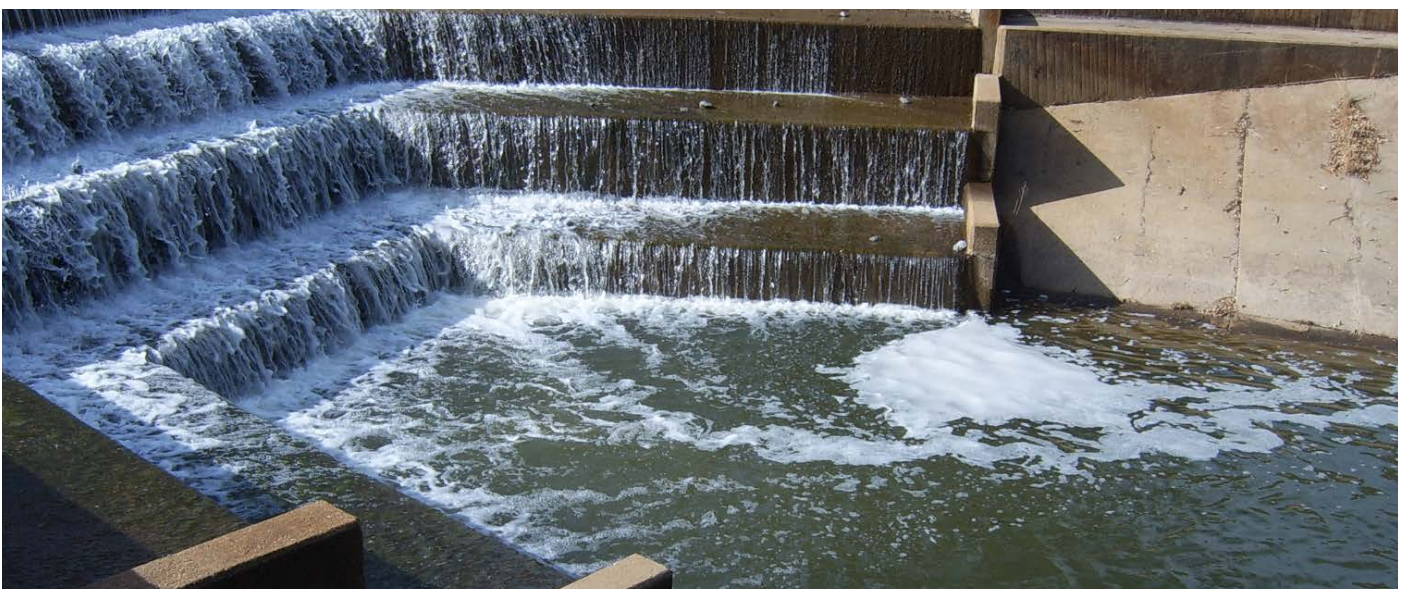
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