

# Start of Season Newsletter

2018-19

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August 2018



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# From the Managing Director

Goulburn-Murray Water is poised for what promises to be a busy delivery season. Prevailing dry conditions indicate both our people (delivery consultants, customer representatives and field staff) and our delivery infrastructure (storages, channels and service points) will be at capacity from the start of the gravity irrigation season.

We are ready for the challenge. The summer months of 2018 placed a heavy workload on GMW and, with the co-operation of our customers, we had a smooth season of deliveries. Substantial Winter Works investment in infrastructure and maintenance, detailed in this newsletter, has placed us in a positive position for our core responsibilities of efficiently capturing, storing and delivering water. It's been a big effort from our core staff and the Connections Project.

Customers may recall we expected an equally busy start to last year's season. Some very welcome rain in the lead-up to the 2017 opening on 15 August, however, meant a welcome decline in irrigation orders. Hopefully, as this newsletter is finding its way to you, we are experiencing similar conditions.

Regardless, the expectation is for a drier than normal spring and this is detailed in our seasonal outlook and Resource Manager reports in this newsletter.

We are ready to work with our customers in managing their water most effectively and efficiently during this time and I encourage you to take advantage of our numerous points of digital and personal contact for our services. All are detailed in this newsletter, along with other "need-to-know" information tailored for our gravity, groundwater and other customers.

You will also find reports from our Water Service Committees, updates on our recreational activities, visual guides to how your fees and charges are applied, where environmental deliveries are being made and continuing investment in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) via the Connections Project.

I mentioned GMW is ready for the challenge of the 2018-19 season. As a business, our focus is also firmly on readying ourselves for the medium and long-term challenges of the future.

We are aware the GMID is changing, water availability is an ever-constant issue and GMW has committed to keeping our prices low and affordable for our customers. At the same time, we must innovate to maintain an asset base of about \$5 billion.



Structurally under our transformation, we are now in the process of re-aligning our business for greater accountability and transparency. This is not about finding minor savings. We are looking for significant operational cost reductions and capital efficiency gains to support the objective of affordable prices. With respect to pricing and maintaining our ageing assets, we are actively engaging with the Tariff and Pricing and our GMID Asset Strategy Customer Working Groups, including our committed customers and stakeholders.

All this work is being progressed through a Transformation Panel who will be presenting a low-price, high-efficiency business case to our Board of Directors early in 2019. An update on how we are transforming our business is also included in this newsletter.

I wish customers the very best for the 2018-19 season and encourage them to make the most of our services. We are also hopeful of a wetter than forecast season.

**Pat Lennon, Managing Director**



# Seasonal outlook message

Northern Victoria experienced a dry start to winter in 2018 with below average rainfall for the 12 months to June 2018. Winter is usually when storage levels start to rise, however this season storage levels have not increased significantly due to strong demand and low inflows.

The exceptions are Lake William Hovell which has filled and Lake Hume which has increased mainly due to transfers from the Snowy system. Lake Eildon has performed best with 50 per cent of the long-term average inflows received from May to July, but the storage level has only risen slightly due to water released to meet demand.

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal rainfall outlooks indicate drier than average conditions are highly likely during the August to October period. An El Niño event, which typically brings drier weather to southeast Australia, is also possible later in 2018.

In light of these outlooks, GMW is working with stakeholders and customers to maximise water availability and minimise impacts.

## Deliveries and water reserves last season

GMW delivered more than two million megalitres of water to customers in the 2017/18 irrigation season. The carryover into 2018/19 was 950GL which covered all northern Victorian entitlements. Northern Victorian entitlement carryover excluding environmental water was about 560GL. The water reserves established the previous year helped all systems reach 100 per cent of high reliability water shares by December 2017 despite the dry conditions. The Campaspe system received 59 per cent of low reliability water shares by April 2018. The Broken and Bullarook systems each received 100 per cent of low reliability water shares.

## Seasonal determinations

The seasonal determinations were last updated on 1 August with an update due 15 August 2018. The Murray system moved from 47 per cent of high-reliability water shares to 49 per cent. The Goulburn system and the Loddon system increased from 34 per cent to 37 per cent, while the Campaspe system remained at 100 per cent high-reliability water shares. Seasonal determinations in the Broken system and the Bullarook system remained at 0 per cent high-reliability water shares.

Resource Manager Mark Bailey said there had been minor improvements in the volume of water available in the fortnight to August 1: "We still need more rain to increase storage levels and generate larger seasonal determination improvements."

## No change to Risk of Spill

There is no change to the risk of spill in the Murray, Goulburn or Campaspe systems.

Resource Manager for northern Victoria Mark Bailey announced on 10 August the risk of spill in each of the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe systems during 2018/19 remained above the 10 per cent threshold needed to declare a low risk of spill.

"Recent rainfall has added water to the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe storages," Dr Bailey said. "While small, the improvements have kept risks above the declaration threshold in all systems."

Victoria's share of the volume in Lake Hume gives the Murray system a 44 per cent risk of spill. The risk of spill from Lake Eildon in the Goulburn system is about 12 per cent and from Lake Eppalock in the Campaspe system about 20 per cent.

"Water in spillable water accounts remains quarantined from use or trade."

Dr Bailey said the risk of spill is an accounting assessment and did not describe the chances of flooding this season.

The risk of spill in the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe systems will next be updated on 10 September 2018.

## What is the role of the Northern Victorian Resource Manager?

Every season, entitlement holders who hold high and low-reliability water shares receive a percentage of those shares. The percentage depends on seasonal conditions and available storage volumes - this is called a seasonal determination.

The Minister for Water appointed the Resource Manager to make seasonal determinations for all northern Victorian regulated river systems including the Goulburn, Broken, Campaspe, Loddon, Bullarook and Murray. Seasonal determinations are updated on the 1st and 15th of every month to ensure that any improvements from rainfall and inflows to storages can be distributed to entitlement holders as early as possible.

The Northern Victorian Resource Manager has used historical inflow records to assess seasonal determination outlooks. New guidelines recommend the use of climate behaviour after July 1975 to assess resource availability under the effects of climate change. For details, go to [www.nvrm.net.au](http://www.nvrm.net.au)

# GMW Winter Works

Our extensive 2018 Winter Works program has now wrapped up – providing a range of innovative improvements across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

This year the Campaspe Siphon Relining Project near Rochester was a key focus, which saw the existing siphon relined with fibre-reinforced concrete. It means the historic asset will continue to operate and provide service to both Rochester and Loddon Valley Irrigation Districts into the future.

“The newly-relined siphon barrels are now in use,” Lead Project Manager Linc Wellington said. “We’re happy to say this project was completed on time and within our \$3.7 million budget.

“This project was originally intended to be carried out over two winter periods but we were able to make some project innovations and find a way to complete the works this winter. This has saved us a lot of time and costs for remobilisation.”

Work on Bulls Siphon, 5km east of Campaspe Siphon, was another significant project to remove and replace the old structure, which was delivered on time and within budget.

GMW Managing Director Pat Lennon said \$4.5 million was spent on linear works (channel remediation) this winter period. This included three sites in Murray Valley, two sites in Shepparton, two sites in Rochester, one in Loddon Valley and one in Torrumbarry.

In Shepparton, a geo-composite liner was trialled in a channel as part of GMW’s remodelling program. Project Manager Linc Wellington said this minimised the amount of fill material that was required to be carted to site.

“With traditional remodelling work it requires select clay material to be imported which is where a lot of the cost is. However with this trial site we have been able to utilise existing material onsite to build and shape the banks with minimal fill being carted.

“Once the bed is cut and banks are shaped the liner can be placed and tied into the channel banks with rock armour placed over the top,” Mr Wellington said.

In addition to the linear works program, \$5.5 million was spent on structure works. GMW completed more than 40 structures during Winter Works, and some works previously completed during the irrigation season. This will take the total to 67 structures within the 2017/18 program.

“We’ve also been working closely with the Connections Project on winter works initiatives, which has been great to share expertise.”

Mr Wellington said beyond the Campaspe Siphon and Bull Siphon works, other structural projects\* have included:

- The upgrade of a road culvert in Torrumbarry with 2.1m diameter reinforced concrete pipes. One headwall will be installed on one side, which is a cost-saving initiative and will eliminate the need to install a second headwall. This cost \$150,000 which was \$64,000 under budget.
- Refurbishment of two road bridges in Torrumbarry, with a project cost of \$185,000 each. A cost saving was achieved by utilising the same crew on both projects.
- Two rail crossings have been upgraded in the Central Goulburn area, both of which were at least 100 years old.
- The East Goulburn 2 channel siphons in Shepparton have been replaced. The two barrels were old and prone to leakage, and have been replaced with a single-barrel reinforced concrete pipe. This project cost \$415,000, which was \$65,000 under budget. A road crossing has also been replaced near this site.
- In Murray Valley, projects include replacement of a road crossing at Yourang Rd, and replacement of a road crossing on the Murray Valley Number 1 Channel, which cost \$256,000, which was \$37,000 under budget and \$261,000, which was \$50,000 under budget.
- In Central Goulburn, an occupational crossing was replaced with a 12m long box culvert, which cost \$110,000, which was \$56,000 under budget.
- In Loddon Valley, a section of the Western Waranga Channel was replaced with a 17m long box culvert, which cost \$220,000.

In regards to other works during the 2017/18 program, GMW’s Project Delivery Team carried out rock armouring works at Stuart Murray Canal and Cattanaach Canal, dam wall crest refurbishment and embankment works at Waranga Basin, and other drainage and core works.

*\*structural project costs above are approximate only.*



# Connections Project on track to complete \$200 million program

The Connections Project will this year complete an annual program of works valued at more than \$200 million as it accelerates towards completion in 2020.

The works are being carried out across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) to improve and upgrade ageing infrastructure.

Project Director Frank Fisseler said the project was carrying out works year round in consultation with landowners.

“This means connecting more people to the modernised delivery network sooner,” Mr Fisseler said.

A large portion of works was recently completed during this year’s winter shut-down. This included:

- Installing more than **125 automated regulators** to modernise and automate the delivery system
- Upgrading and rationalising more than **500 meter outlets** across the GMID.
- Remediating **more than 25km of channel** to fix leakage and seepage and generate water savings.
- Constructing **more than 45km of pipeline**, replacing high water loss channels with more efficient and improved connections

- **Decommissioning about 90km of inefficient channel** that is losing water to leakage, seepage and evaporation.

“During the busy winter works period contractors have worked more than 220,000 hours to deliver works across the GMID,” Mr Fisseler said.

“Our ECI contractor John Holland had up to 500 contractors employed, of which 90 per cent are local businesses.

“This year’s significant works program shows the Reset Delivery Plan is continuing to deliver and landowners are continuing to see results. The Project is on track and on budget.”

The \$2 billion Connections Project is funded by the Victorian and Australian governments to ensure the sustainable future of productive agriculture in northern Victoria.

“This is Australia’s largest irrigation modernisation project and it’s creating a world-class irrigation network in the GMID,” he said.

For more information go to [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au)



# Fees and charges at work 2018-19

**Capital  
spend**  
**\$25.7** million

**Maintenance  
spend**  
**\$25.6** million

**Operations  
spend**  
**\$51.0** million

## Bulk Water

**\$9.2**  
MILLION

Including outlet works upgrade and tower bulkheads protective coating, spillway gates, hoists upgrades, installation of remote operations equipment and upgrading site access.

**\$3.2**  
MILLION

Including electrical works, beaching rock works, spillway, embankment, intake, weir, plant and equipment maintenance.

**\$20.7**  
MILLION

Including weed control, water quality monitoring, fencing, planning applications, five year dam safety inspection, rubbish removal and MDBA contribution.

## Drainage

**\$0.8**  
MILLION

Including structures (bridges, culverts) program and electrical mechanical works.

**\$2.1**  
MILLION

Including drainage inlets and pump station maintenance, weed and vermin control, fencing and access maintenance.

**\$1.1**  
MILLION

Drainage and public groundwater pumps operations, water quality monitoring and sampling and planning applications.

## Water Delivery

**\$15.2**  
MILLION

Including linear program (channel bank remodelling, fences, rock armouring), meters, structures and electrical mechanical works.

**\$19.5**  
MILLION

Automated channel maintenance of level sensors, pedestal radio equipment, batteries, pipes, meters and other assets. Various civil maintenance activities including: fencing, irrigation bank works, channel leaks, desilting, structure leaks, tree removal, and access tracks, weed and vermin control.

**\$26.2**  
MILLION

General field operations, meter reading, water management system maintenance and support, system monitoring and planning, customer services, water quality monitoring and resource management.

## Diversions

**\$0.5**  
MILLION

Including meter installation.

**\$0.8**  
MILLION

Including repair of meters and associated infrastructure, remedial maintenance on GMW owned weirs and structures and improving access to diversions assets.

**\$3.0**  
MILLION

Including order planning and operation of associated infrastructure (weirs, pipelines etc), streamflow monitoring and implementation of restrictions, bore monitoring, interference investigations, compliance and resource management.



# Fixed charges

A friendly reminder that fixed charges accounts have recently been issued so our customers will see these arrive in the mail.

These will include items like Infrastructure Access Fees, Water Entitlements Storage Fees and Service Point Fees. An information sheet has been included with the bills to help describe what our fees mean and what has changed from last year.

Some important items to note with these accounts are:

- Our discount for early payment is two per cent
- There is a Victorian Government concession of 50 per cent (to a maximum of \$160.45) available on fixed charges accounts for eligible concession card holders upon application. To be eligible, the customer must hold a Pensioner Concession Card (Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs), a Health Care Card (Centrelink) or a Gold Card (Veterans' Affairs). Customers can only claim a concession on your principle place of residence.

- Customers can elect to pay their fixed charges account by instalments. Instalments are spread over eight consecutive months, and payments are due on the 16th of each month. Instalments for 2018/19 fixed accounts start on 16 September 2018 with the final payment due 16 April 2019 (please note any overdue amounts are payable immediately).

You can also check your account online with MyGMW at [www.gmwater.com.au](http://www.gmwater.com.au) or phone us on 1800 013 357.

**WATER**  
Goulburn-Murray Water  
Fixed Charges 2018/19  
Date of Issue: 27/07/2018

Customer: A Customer  
PO Box 1234  
TULLAH, VIC 3616

Account Number: 12345678

Property Location and Description  
800m Road, TULLAH, VIC 3616  
V 1234 F 123 Lot 1 Plan 123456

Overdue Charges as at 10/7/2018

Overdue	Interest	Total
\$956.21	\$88.52	\$1,044.73

**Details of Entitlement and Fees at 10/7/2018**

Category	Amount
<b>Delivery</b>	
Service Fee - \$120.00	\$120.00
Water Service Point - 1.00 Perpetual Fee @ \$720.00 each	\$720.00
Infrastructure Access Fee - 0.50 ML per Day Delivery Share @ \$240.00/ML/day	\$240.00
<b>Storage</b>	
Entitlement Storage Fee - 125.80 ML Murray Low Reliability @ \$13.20/ML	\$1,666.10
Entitlement Storage Fee - 57.10 ML Murray Low Reliability @ \$4.10/ML	\$234.11
<b>Surface Drainage</b>	
Service Fee - \$120.00	\$120.00
Road Fee - 20.70 hectares @ 25 % of \$4.65/ha	\$192.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,360.04</b>

**Payments and Adjustments**

Category	Amount
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,405.77</b>

BPAY View - View and Pay this bill using internet banking.  
BPAY View Registration No. - Please enter this BPAY Reference No.

See reverse for our many convenient payment options.  
For payments made by mail please attach this section of your account.

Account No: 12345678  
Issue Date: 27/07/2018

MyGMW logo and QR code.

## Keep up-to-date with eNews

Want to know what's happening around Goulburn-Murray Water? Keep up-to-date by subscribing to our monthly eNews!

Packed with important information about seasonal determinations, account information, major projects, events and helpful hints, our eNews is an easy way to stay informed about what matters to our customers.

You can join our mailing list at [gmwater.com.au/subscribe](http://gmwater.com.au/subscribe)

**WATER**  
Goulburn-Murray Water  
eNews  
July 2018

**Lake Mulwala on the rise**  
Lake Mulwala is being refilled over the next four weeks after the lowering of the lake over winter for weed control. A range of foreshore works have also been completed.  
Locals and visitors to Lake Mulwala and Yarrawonga Weir might notice changes.

**Lower Campaspe Valley groundwater update**  
Groundwater licence holders in the Lower Campaspe Valley Water Supply Protection Area have a 100 per cent allocation for the 2018/19 season.

**Blue-green algae warnings**  
Three blue-green algae warnings remain in place at GMW storages at Cairn Curran Reservoir, Hepburns Lagoon and Lake Eppalock.  
Members of the public are asked to avoid contact with the water at these locations. Warning signs.

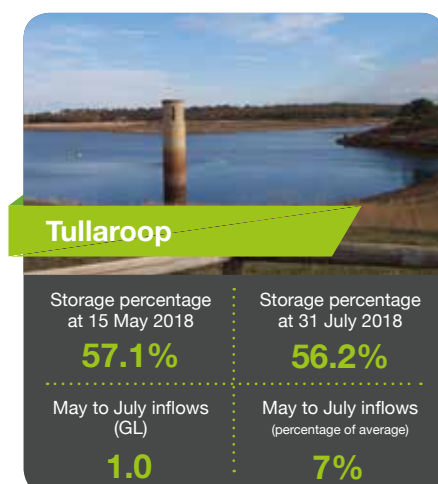
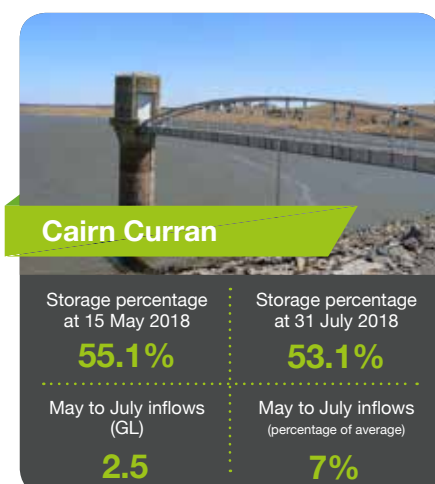
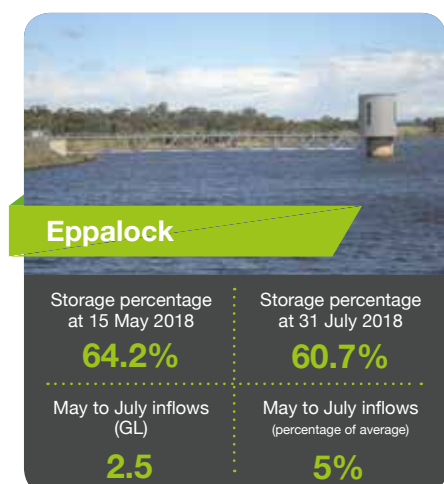
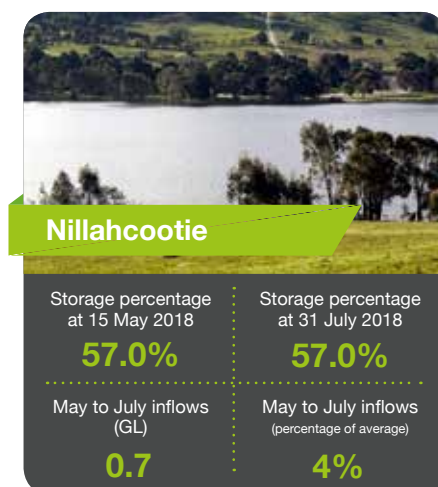
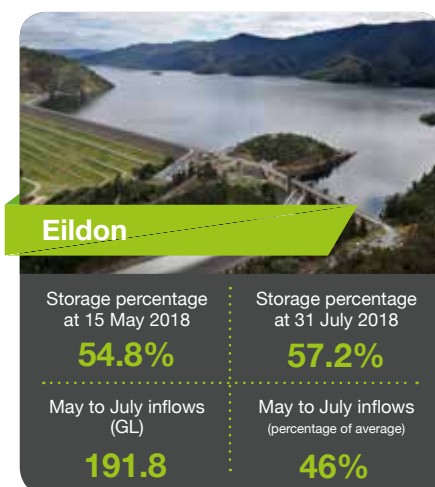
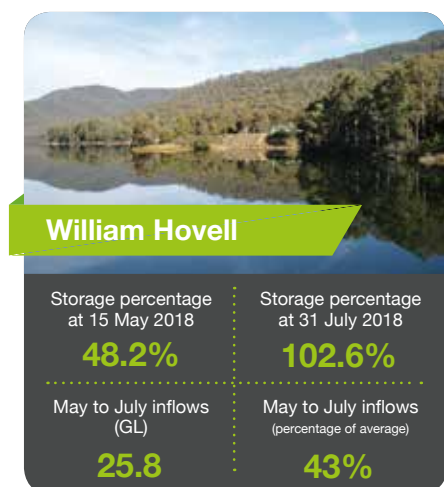
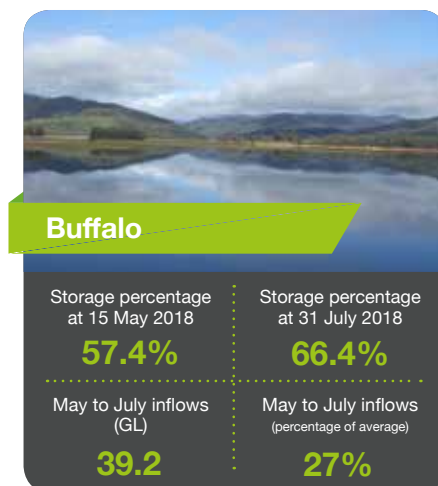
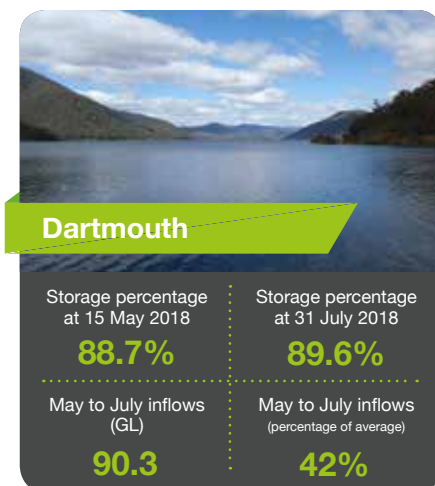
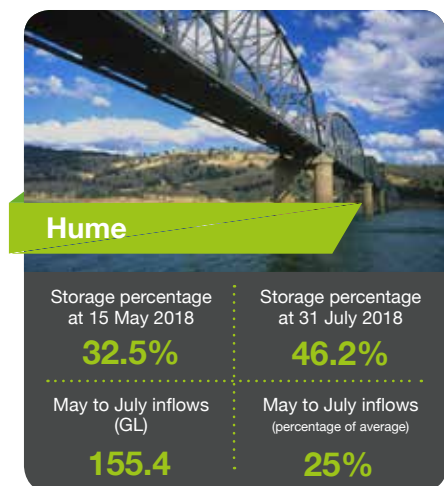
# Storage levels and storage inflows

Winter is when storage levels usually start to rise, however due to a lack of winter rainfall storage levels have generally not increased significantly.

The exceptions are Lake William Hovell which has filled, and Lake Hume which has increased mainly due to transfers from the Snowy system. The volume

of water that has flowed into the major storages has been well below average.

Eildon has performed best with about half of the long term average inflows received from May to July, but the storage level has only risen slightly due to water released to meet demand, including power generation requirements.





# Transformation Project overview

Goulburn-Murray Water manages about 70 per cent of Victoria's stored water resources, 50 per cent of its groundwater supplies and operates Australia's largest irrigation network – the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

Both the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have invested over \$2 billion to modernise GMW's ageing infrastructure with a view to reducing water losses to ensure there is sufficient water availability to support irrigators in Northern Victoria and to meet environmental water savings targets.

However, GMW is facing many significant strategic challenges including:

- the impacts of Climate Change reducing inflows into catchments;
- obligations under the National Water Initiative and the Murray Darling Basin Plan restricting the amount of water available for consumption and use;
- water trading and water use has resulting in changes to entitlements in the GMID;
- the Connections Project, while providing enormous opportunities to improve the efficiency of the GMID, also presents future financial challenges as the district footprint reduces in size and modernised assets require replacement; and
- change impacting on the agricultural sector, including movements in international commodity prices.

These challenges require GMW to be dynamic and adaptable to meet the high performance levels expected from its customers in an efficient and financially sustainable way. Minister for Water Lisa Neville last year announced the establishment of the Strategic Advisory Panel to support GMW to meet these challenges.

The findings and 30 recommendations adopted by the Minister this year focus on improving the efficiency and affordability of all services provided by GMW to customers, while ensuring a satisfying work environment for employees. It will also support longer term strategic planning for the business.

A Transformation Team has been established to adopt these recommendations. It includes Transformation Manager Darren Nabbs and five Project Teams drawn from within the business.



Transformation Manager, Darren Nabbs

The Project Team roles are:

- **Information Technology:** reviewing the technological tools that assist the reporting, monitoring and delivery of GMW's strategy and its operations.
- **Asset and Capital Delivery:** reviewing GMW's asset management performance and capital investment against benchmark standards. GMID footprint and service standards reviews will also be undertaken.
- **Governance and Structure:** ensuring GMW has an operational business structure that is properly aligned to its services, is transparent and provides accountability.
- **Customer and Stakeholder Engagement:** reviewing the current GMW engagement strategy as well as the customer charter, customer levels of service and the development of tools to promote opportunities in the GMID.
- **Finance:** updating GMW's financial model to drive savings over the short, medium and long term.

These Project Teams are now developing business plans with support from the senior GMW Executive management team. These plans will be put to the Board of Directors for approval in early 2019.

Stakeholders expect GMW to be a highly strategic and commercially focused business. They need confidence that the organisation can deliver efficient, reliable and affordable services well into the future, and take full advantage of the \$2 Billion Connections Project.

GMW is excited to report it is well on the way to transforming the business and meeting these goals.

# Renewed Surface Drainage Water Management Program

A range of surface drainage projects across northern Victoria are hitting the mark to support long-term irrigated farming.

GMW's Renewed Surface Drainage Water Management Program started in late 2016 and will run for four years.

The program initially focused on completing construction of priority projects (constructed drains) however work is now centred on developing three 'hybrid' drainage schemes. These schemes or Surface Water Management Systems rely on removing obstructions and restoring catchment drainage through Drainage Courses Declarations under the Water Act 1989.

One of GMW's key functions under the Act is to manage drainage works and services associated with the irrigation districts. GMW has a long history of successfully delivering surface drainage capital works programs in partnership with Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) and Agriculture Victoria (AgVic).

In the past 12 months, the surface drainage program has achieved the following:

## **Priority Construction Projects update:**

- Stanhope Depression Drain Stage 2 – Construction is 100 per cent complete.
- Mosquito Drain 40 – Construction completed in 2017/18 except for a road culvert. A private wetland has been integrated as part of the drain.

- Muckatah 2/3P Community Surface Drain Project – An external project manager has been appointed and drain construction works are scheduled for late October 2018.
- Muckatah 3/8P Community Surface Drain project – GMW and AgVic staff are working on an action plan and timeframes to finalise project feasibility.

## **Hybrid Surface Water Management Systems projects:**

- Upper Deakin Project (located between Harston and Stanhope) – All modelling and design work is complete. The project plans have been drafted for review, in preparation for finalisation in coming weeks. This project is also being used as a pilot to test cost-benefit analysis that can be applied to other hybrid projects.
- Cornella Creek/Ryan's Floodway Project (located near Colbinabbin, running north towards Lake Cooper) – Modelling and survey work is complete. Final modifications are being considered to support the best drainage flow.
- Guilfus-Congupna Creek Project (in the Congupna and Tallygaroopna area) – A survey of proposed drainage alignment has been completed. This project is now ready for hydraulic and hydrologic modelling.





# Groundwater update

Goulburn-Murray Water plays an essential role in the sustainable management of groundwater for local communities and the environment in northern Victoria. GMW issues and administers licences and develops and implements management plans in northern Victoria on behalf of the Minister for Water.

## Groundwater allocations

Allocations have been announced at 100 per cent for all groundwater areas except for the Loddon Highlands Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) and the Mid Loddon Groundwater Management Area (GMA). This means that groundwater licence holders can use up to 100 per cent of their entitlement during the 2018/19 season.

Allocations for Mid Loddon GMA and the Loddon Highlands WSPA will be announced on 15 September 2018.

## Groundwater use

Groundwater use across GMW's region (excluding the Shepparton Irrigation Region GMA) in the 2017/18 irrigation season was approximately 50 per cent of entitlement. This is an increase from around 30 per cent of entitlement used in the 2016/17 season. This is consistent with 2017/18 being drier than the previous year.

Groundwater use was less than 20 per cent of entitlement in some areas, such as the Upper Murray, Upper Goulburn, Kiewa and Broken Groundwater Management Areas. In the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA and the Mid Loddon GMA use was around 70 per cent of entitlement.

For a comprehensive overview of the 2017/18 irrigation season, annual reports and newsletters will be available for most groundwater management units in October and November online at [www.gmwater.com.au](http://www.gmwater.com.au)

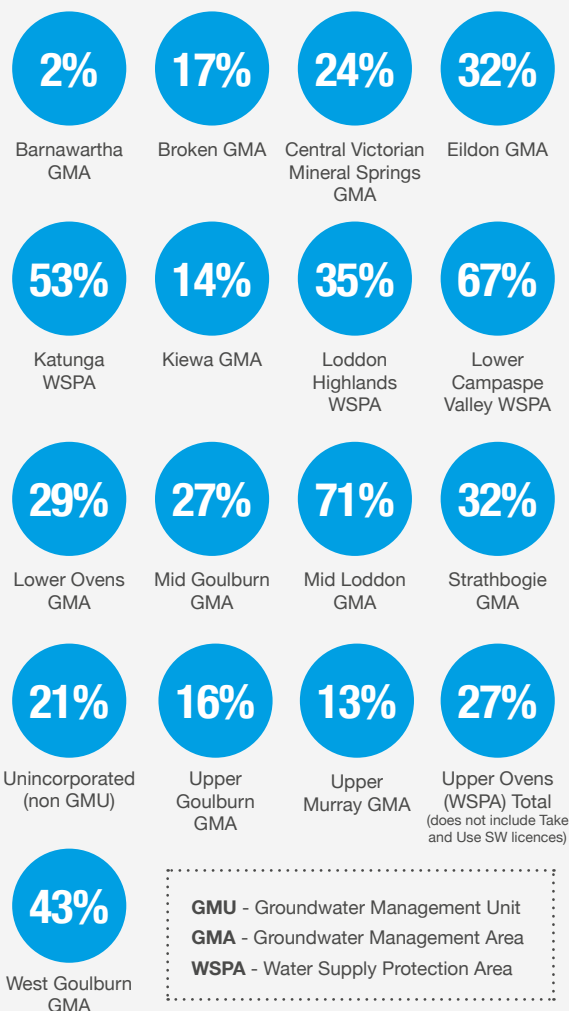
## Groundwater trading

Groundwater trading can be undertaken on a temporary or permanent basis throughout GMW's region except in the Shepparton Irrigation Region Groundwater Management Area.

To make it easier to find a buyer or seller Watermatch, an online groundwater trading forum can be used. To post a message about trading please go to: [www.watermatch.com.au/](http://www.watermatch.com.au/)

## Groundwater use 2017-18

Groundwater use as a percentage of entitlement across GMUs



## Groundwater updates

The Lower Ovens Groundwater Management Area local management plan was reviewed during the 2017/18 season to assess how the plan performed since its implementation in 2011.

GMW has been speaking with groundwater users in the area to gather feedback on any need to amend the plan.

A draft amended plan is currently being prepared and will be released to groundwater users and the general public during the 2018/19 irrigation season.

# Recreation activities

Our water storages provide entitlements for our major customers – irrigators, stock and domestic users, urban water authorities and environmental water holders. We also recognise recreation as a vital part of what we do – providing many community and regional benefits. We currently maintain recreational infrastructure at 14 of our 24 storages, including the management of safe boating, fishing and other activities.

Our role includes oversight of more than 700 houseboat licenses and the leasing of 11 caravan parks, 62 clubs and 80 public recreation areas near the foreshore of our storages and waterways.

For full details on our recreation responsibilities, including recreation guides to our most popular storages, please visit [www.g-mwater.com.au/recreation-tourism](http://www.g-mwater.com.au/recreation-tourism). Here is a summary of some major initiatives undertaken in recreation over winter:



## Successful weed control at Lake Mulwala

Lake Mulwala has returned to near-usual water levels in time for the new irrigation season after a winter drawdown.

The lowering took place at the request of Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to tackle aquatic weeds and allow for foreshore construction works. The lowering was managed in a way that posed minimal risk of impacting on available water resources.

MDBA Executive Director of River Management Andrew Reynolds said stream flows from the Kiewa and Ovens rivers were used to help re-fill the lake, along with water releases from Hume Dam.

The lowering proved a drawcard for Mulwala – attracting tourists and keen fishermen.

GMW Managing Director Pat Lennon said the successful winter drawdown allowed for effective control of the highly invasive aquatic weed *Egeria densa*.

“Throughout the drawdown we’ve seen the weed dry out and die off, which has been helped by the dry conditions of late. We had half a dozen or so good frosts, which helps kill off the *Egeria*,” he said.

“Our project teams also carried out important foreshore erosion protection works along River Rd, Yarrawonga.”

GMW is the State Constructing Authority responsible for managing and maintaining Lake Mulwala under the direction of the MDBA.



## Improved facilities at Lake Eppalock

New facilities at Lake Eppalock’s Kimbolton Foreshore Reserve have been officially opened and aim to provide an enhanced experience for those visiting the popular lakeside spot.

Works wrapped up in July and include a new toilet block, a new barbecue shelter area, two other smaller shelters and pathways to connect the facilities.

Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan, on behalf of Minister for Water Lisa Neville, opened the new area on July 27. The project was a joint initiative between GMW (\$200,000), the Victorian Fisheries Authority (\$100,000) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (\$100,000).



The VFA contribution is part of the Better Fishing Facilities Fund – linked to the State Government's Target One Million plan to get more Victorians fishing, more often.

Earlier works completed as part of this package have included construction of solar lighting at the lake, upgrades to the carpark and boat ramp, installation of pre-launch preparation zones for vessels, new recycled plastic bollards and improved signs.



### **Foreshore licence conditions extended following consultation**

Further work will be carried out by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) in coming months on foreshore licensing arrangements and the best fee structure for customers.

GMW held a consultation period in July, receiving feedback from about 130 people on the subject.

The original proposal was a user-pays approach aimed at allowing a wider range of foreshore structures managed by GMW.

“The feedback included that long-term licensed customers wanted recognition of the period over which they have held a licensed structure,” Managing Director Pat Lennon said.

“Customers also would like to see earlier inclusion

of unlicensed and unapproved structures in the process.

“The latter was so all users of foreshore land contribute to the cost of administering these structures to ensure public safety and adequate environmental standards.”

Other feedback themes included concern about the scale of fees being proposed, land management issues and that there was confusion about some fees and questions relating to over-sized jetties.

Customers whose jetty and boat ramp licence has expired will now be extended to 30 June 2019 based on current licence conditions, which includes a CPI increase.

GMW will consider all feedback received and work through next steps, which will include consideration of:

- Unlicensed structures – GMW will complete an extensive survey over the remainder of 2018 and into 2019 of all structures to now include those that are currently not licensed
- Allowable structures – criteria for appropriate engineering standards, environmental standards and address user and public safety
- Construction standards – specifically minimum and maximum sizes, and what is appropriate at individual storage environments
- Management controls – which seek to allow the controlled development of public and private infrastructure on storages that we manage. Management controls also help to facilitate recreational use of the waterway where this does not impact on operational requirements of the water storage.
- Consideration of historical use and licensing – taking into account foreshore infrastructure which has been in place for some time
- Licence terms including timeframes for licensing

“We thank our customers for providing us valuable feedback on this complex issue which involves many hundreds of kilometers of foreshore land,” Mr Lennon said.

# **Talk to GMW at the Elmore Field Days**

## **Tuesday 2, Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 October 2018**

Elmore Events Centre, 48 Rosaia Road, Elmore  
For more information visit [www.elmorefielddays.com.au](http://www.elmorefielddays.com.au)

# Environmental water plans

Water for the environment is released into rivers and wetlands to mimic natural flows.

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) delivers this water at the direction of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) and catchment management authorities.

The VEWH's current Seasonal Watering Plan will see 480,000 ML of its water entitlements - from the Hume as well as Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon systems – released in the first six months of the season, from July to December 2018.

The graphic below, provided by the VEWH, illustrates what rivers and wetlands will receive these environmental flows and the intended environmental benefits.



# Irrigation season update

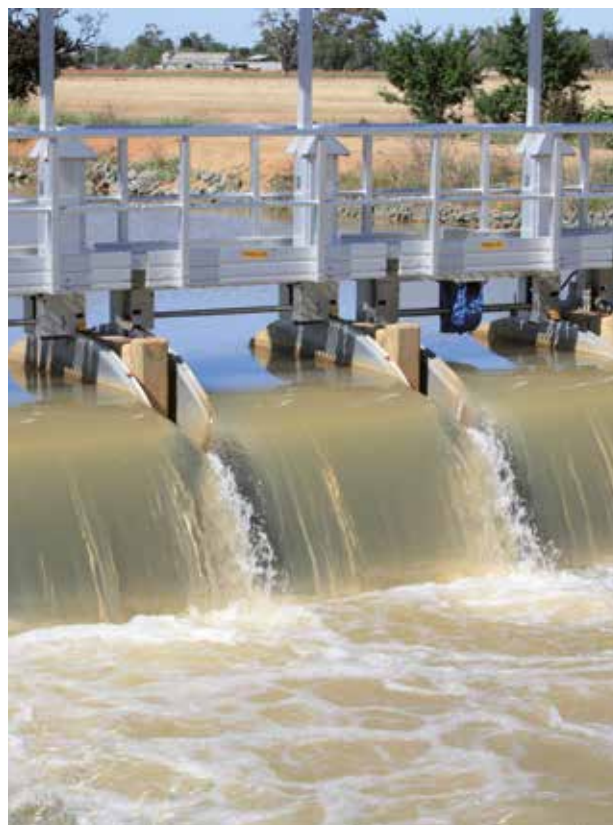
With the irrigation season kicking off again on August 15, our Water Delivery Consultants are back on deck to assist customers.

Our Water Delivery Consultants look after about 15,000 customers in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District and during the irrigation season they're available 24/7, including public holidays. Our friendly field staff are also on hand to help.

They manage deliveries through WaterLINE, GMW's online and telephone water ordering system. WaterLINE allows our customers to communicate with GMW and monitor their water usage based on the allocation and entitlement they hold.

Through the WaterLINE 24 hour service, you can:

- Lodge irrigation orders
- Communicate with our Water Delivery Consultants
- Request changes to start and finish times, or request to alter flow rates
- View your Allocation Account (ABA) balance
- Monitor the available capacity at your outlet
- Input your meter readings to better manage your accounts.



WaterLINE can be accessed online at [www.gmwater.com.au/waterline](http://www.gmwater.com.au/waterline) and by phoning 1300 469 469 (1300 GMW GMW).

## Delivery Share Review

The way in which delivery shares are managed has been in the spotlight in recent months as the Victorian Government carries out a review of arrangements in northern Victoria. The Delivery Share Review will consider if delivery shares are working as originally intended, after they were first introduced in 2007.

The review is part of the Water for Victoria plan to examine how the future use of delivery shares can support affordable and resilient irrigation districts that are attractive to new businesses. The environment in which delivery shares are used has changed significantly over time, with less water available in the irrigation pool through climate change and environmental water recovery under the Murray Darling Basin Plan. There has also been extreme drought and floods, new technologies, changing markets and changes in regulation and pricing.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is carrying out the review, in close collaboration with Goulburn-Murray Water, Lower Murray Water and other key stakeholders. A range of options have been proposed to change or replace delivery shares by consulting with water sector and irrigator representatives and looking at the data and evidence around current delivery shareholdings and water use.

A Preliminary Findings Report which includes the options is available online at [engage.vic.gov.au/delivery-share-review](http://engage.vic.gov.au/delivery-share-review)

Consultation was to close on 20 August 2018 when feedback will be reviewed and considered.



# Water Service Committee reports

Our group of Water Services Committees (WSCs) and Regional Water Service Committees (RWSCs) work with us on matters relating to operations in their local area. They are distinguished by district boundaries comprised of similar customers.

Through regular meetings, these representatives advise and assist us in better understanding issues facing customers and stakeholders. They help us understand service expectations, key information and learnings that can be implemented in planning projects, strategies and setting priorities.

Regional WSCs represent customers who source water from both regulated and unregulated rivers and streams, groundwater bores or licensed private dams. In comparison, WSCs represent irrigation customers from each district in the GMID.

For information on WSCs, their operating areas and membership, please visit [gmwater.com.au/about/wsc](http://gmwater.com.au/about/wsc)

Here is a summary from committee chairs and deputies on their thoughts coming into the 2018/19 season:

## Loddon and Campaspe Regional WSC

The Loddon and Campaspe Regional Water Services Committee draws in a range of diversions customers who source water from the catchments of the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers. The region includes Pyramid Hill and Lake Meran to the north.

Chair Norm Suckling said the region desperately needs rain in lower areas after a dry winter period. The headland areas have received some rain, but the whole area could use more. New crops are starting to emerge across the region – including carrot seeds which are exported to France in some cases, and farmers who are growing pyrethrum. A diverse range of crops continue in the area, which include potatoes, walnuts and olives, as well as traditional cereals.

Mr Suckling said he favoured a proactive approach to decision-making in the water industry, with less politics and more input from irrigators. He said the committee was working hard to represent all licensees and achieve fair outcomes for the district.

## Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and Upper Murray Regional WSC

The Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and Upper Murray Regional WSC represents diversions customers who source



water from the catchments of the Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and Upper Murray (above Hume) Rivers. Customers in this area use water for a range of horticultural and agricultural crops.

Chair Peter Serpell said the area needed a good dose of spring rain as the region was about a month behind in rainfall. He said dams were starting to fill up, but more rain was needed for summer water security in both regulated and unregulated systems.

Mr Serpell said the outlook was brighter for the dairy industry in the Kiewa Valley, with farmers feeling cautiously optimistic. He said Kiewa Country milk had been purchased by Kyvalley Dairy Group, which has pledged to revive the brand and keep it in Australian-owned hands.

## Goulburn Broken Regional WSC

The Goulburn Broken Regional WSC represents customers across the Goulburn Broken region. The area consists of the unregulated tributaries that flow into the Goulburn River and Broken River. Customers in this area often use water for domestic and stock, irrigation and commercial purposes.

Chair Craig Madden said work to review costs to customers has been an ongoing project and one that is key for licence holders into the future. He noted long term considerations include climate change, demographic changes, private rights and the environment as a water customer. Potential changes to the Murray Darling Basin Plan will also have flow-on effects, he said.



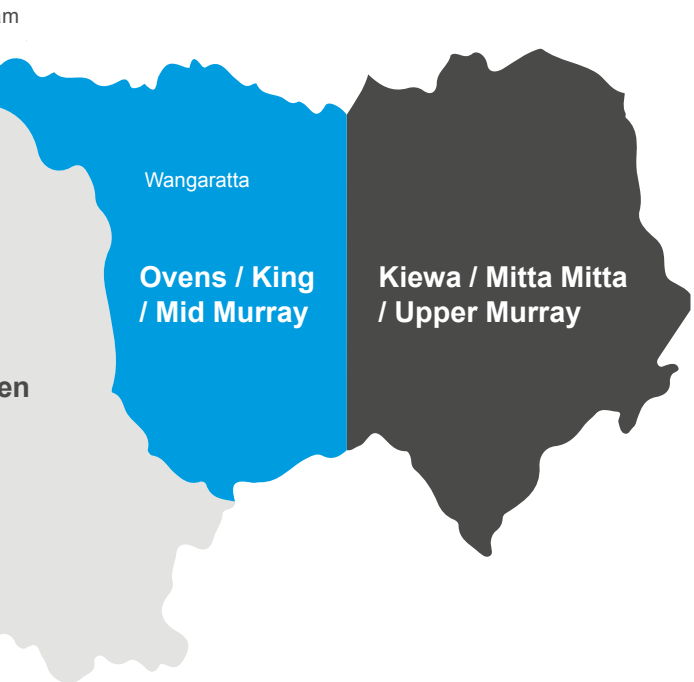
## Ovens, King and Mid-Murray Regional WSC

The Ovens, King and Mid-Murray Regional WSC represents diversions customers who source water from the catchments of the Ovens, King and Mid-Murray (Hume to Nyah) Rivers.

Chair Malcolm Carson said that the King, Buffalo and Ovens River had experienced reasonable flows considering low rainfall during autumn and early winter. He said Lake William Hovell filled in mid-June and Lake Buffalo remained at 60 per cent capacity. He hoped that Lake Buffalo inflows would continue to be monitored and that the remaining 40 per cent would be filled once the dam gates were closed. He said only 30 per cent of irrigators activated their licences in the last two seasons, and that rosters and restrictions were close to being implemented on the King River.

Due to the low capacity of the dams, Mr Carson said the current situation reminded him of 2006-2007 when a total ban on irrigation was implemented on the King River. He said it was important to remember that conditions can change rapidly and the large catchment area was one of the most reliable rainfall areas of Victoria. For example, in the first three days of December 2017, there was a huge rainfall event of 100mm (4 inches), whereby the rivers came close to breaking their banks, but luckily didn't.

Moving forward, he said it was these types of weather events that need to be captured and capitalised on to ensure better water security. Of the recent rain at the start of August, there was a combined flow of 4000 ML in the Ovens River at Wangaratta.



In regards to recent dry conditions, Mr Madden said this is nothing new for farmers but the critical aspect would be the response to it and management of customer expectations.

He was supportive of regional development opportunities and said GMW had a role to play in this space in addition to the traditional role of a water authority. By increasing market sophistication, for example by trading groundwater, he said it could create opportunities for diversity – not only for the Goulburn Broken region but across the broader diversions spectrum.

## Central Goulburn WSC

The Central Goulburn WSC represents irrigation customers from Kyabram, Tatura, Merrigum and Tongala. Its customers primarily use water for irrigated agriculture and stock and domestic purposes.

Chair Peter Hacon said water security remained a key issue for the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District, which needs to be addressed urgently. With less water available in the region and a changing environment, Mr Hacon said in his opinion, Victorian Government assistance was needed to keep water in the GMID. Every farmer is also facing the challenges of continuing dry weather, he said.

In regards to the DELWP Delivery Share Review currently underway, Mr Hacon said the Infrastructure Access Fee was of most concern to irrigators. He said transparency on what is included in the fee was needed to ensure equity in the costs being passed on to farmers. A clear breakdown of costs was required for irrigators and stakeholders, he said.

## Murray Valley WSC

The Murray Valley WSC represents irrigation customers in the region, including from Nathalia, Numurkah and Cobram. Customers in the area primarily use water for stock and domestic purposes, horticulture and pasture. Aquatic weed management and desilting of channels has become a regular focus for GMW staff in the Murray Valley region.

Chair Jason Andrew reminded irrigation customers that GMW offers flexible payment options, in light of dry conditions that were likely to continue. This includes the ability to pay by instalment, payment extensions, flexible payment plans and government pensioner concessions. Customers can also be provided with information about accredited financial and health support.

Mr Andrews said a focus also remained on the Connections Project and getting Murray Valley customers connected and modernised. He said the outcome of the recent Delivery Share Review would be a topic to watch, and that it was important for authorities to carefully consider the next steps.



## Shepparton WSC

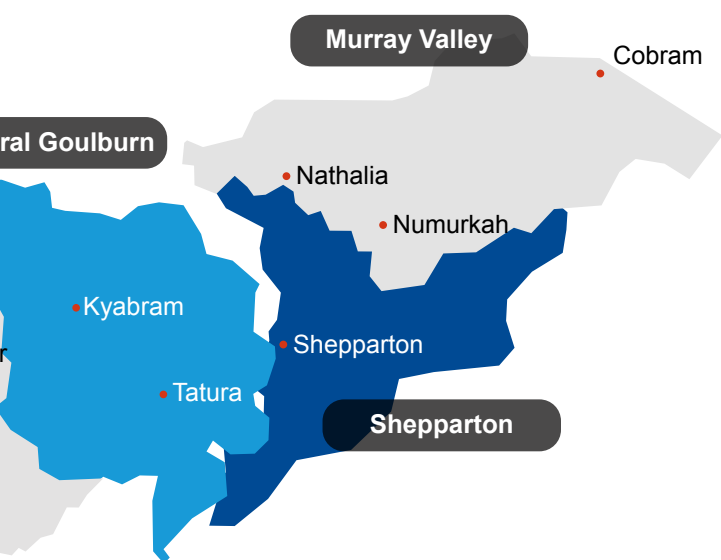
The Shepparton WSC represents irrigation customers in Shepparton and the surrounding region, including Congupna, Tallygaroopna, Invergordon, Katandra West, Bunbartha, Nathalia, Shepparton East and Kialla. The area has a range of irrigated agriculture – which ranges from intense horticulture to dairying areas, annual pasture and permanent pasture.

Deputy Chair Kevin Minogue said the DELWP-led Delivery Share Review had been a focus for the area, with a number of Shepparton irrigators attending a community engagement session on August 3. He said it would be interesting to see what changes to delivery shares may ensue.

Mr Minogue said water allocation was a key issue for the area and he hoped allocations would increase earlier in the season rather than later. He said it was important to use water wisely as it was set to be a tough year, and encouraged irrigators to report leaks or channel faults if they discovered any. He said the Shepparton East Pipeline Project was another focus for the region, which locals were keen to see come to fruition.

On a broader scale, Mr Minogue encouraged GMW to address differential prices, as he noted Shepparton's prices were higher than other districts of the GMID.





## Loddon Valley WSC

The Loddon Valley WSC represents irrigation customers in the region surrounding Pyramid Hill. The area is bounded by Boort in the west, half way to Kerang in the north, Pyramid Hill in the east and Serpentine in the south. Loddon Valley customers primarily use water for permanent pasture and annual pasture.

Chair John Nelson said progress on the Connections Project remained a key focus for customers in the Loddon Valley, including upgrades to on-farm infrastructure. Mr Nelson said he supported development of the region, and it was important to encourage this and retain water in the area for future farming enterprises.

The recent DELWP Delivery Share Review has also been of interest to customers in the Loddon Valley region, with a range of complexities to consider to find an appropriate outcome.

## Torrumbarry WSC

The Torrumbarry WSC represents irrigation customers from Swan Hill, Kerang, Cohuna and surrounding areas. In the western part of the district, from Lake Boga to Nyah, there are three

pumped irrigation districts – Tresco, Woorinen and Nyah. Customers from this region use water for horticulture, pasture and irrigated cropping.

Chair Ann Hodge said the recent DELWP Delivery Share Review had been a key focus at a well-attended public meeting in Kerang. She said that irrigators expressed concern about the disproportionate load they carry as a result of owning delivery shares compared with others who gain from the system without contributing to its running costs. The review had been a good forum to raise these concerns, she said, and that many people saw very little value in owning delivery shares.

Water security and affordability has been another focus for the Torrumbarry WSC because as water leaves the district, the diminishing customer base will increasingly struggle to pay for the system.

The Connections Project is continuing to progress in the area with a large amount of winter works completed. Ms Hodge said a balance had to be struck between winter works being carried out and assisting those who wished to start irrigating early due to the ongoing dry conditions.

## Rochester-Campaspe WSC

The Rochester-Campaspe WSC represents irrigation customers in the region, including Echuca.

Chair Richard Anderson said the dry start to winter was a continuing concern, with opening allocations that reflected the low rainfall. He commended the recently completed works near Rochester to replace Bulls Siphon, and refurbish Campaspe Siphon, which were finished in time for the new irrigation season and within budget. Connections winter works have also progressed rapidly in the area, with three pipelines under construction near Lockington, Corop West and Nanneella, he said.

Mr Anderson said it was important that water delivery at the start of season was not compromised by any winter works projects nearing completion.

Mr Anderson said the Rochester-Campaspe WSC has made input into the DELWP Delivery Share Review discussion which was underway. The committee continue to have input into the Tariff and Price, and Asset Working Groups, he said.

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**MyGMW** Manage your GMW account online, anytime and anywhere, through our secure online portal, MyGMW. You can update your details, check your account balance, submit a request for a special metre read and much more. Access MyGMW from our website at [www.gmwater.com.au/customer-services/manage-my-account](http://www.gmwater.com.au/customer-services/manage-my-account).

It's also smart phone compatible. If you would like help using MyGMW phone us on 1800 013 357 or visit your local customer service centre.



The Start and Stop SMS service enables you to receive reminders of when your water order is to start and stop. You can subscribe for this service through your WaterLINE account.



WaterLINE is our 24-hour online and telephone water ordering system where customers can lodge irrigation orders, find out their Allocation Account (ABA) balance and manage their accounts.

WaterLINE can be accessed by visiting [www.gmwater.com.au/waterline](http://www.gmwater.com.au/waterline), or by calling 1300 469 469.



eNews is a monthly email including customer updates and important information, profiles, news, water safety tips, information on local area operations, key dates, projects, events and much more.

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For more detailed information on all water-related entitlements, visit the Victorian Water Register at <http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/>

# We want your feedback

We value your feedback and your suggestions on how we can improve our customer service.

## Compliments

If you had a good experience while dealing with us, we'd like to hear about it to ensure that we can continue to improve your experience with us. Again, this will help us improve our service.

Please phone us on free call 1800 013 357 or email [feedback@gmwater.com.au](mailto:feedback@gmwater.com.au) with your feedback and we'll ensure that it is passed on to the relevant business unit or staff member.

## Feedback and complaints

If you have a complaint please contact us:



**Phone** free call 1800 013 357



**Email** [feedback@gmwater.com.au](mailto:feedback@gmwater.com.au)



**Mail** Write to us and/or complete our online complaints form and post to:

Customer Service Centre  
Goulburn-Murray Water  
PO Box 165  
Tatura VIC 3616

Visit [www.gmwater.com.au/customer-services/feedback](http://www.gmwater.com.au/customer-services/feedback) for information about our feedback process.

If you wish to make a complaint about the Connections Project, please email [connections@gmwater.com.au](mailto:connections@gmwater.com.au)

## Helping you through difficult times

At Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) we understand that our customers can sometimes face challenging times.

If you're experiencing financial hardship and need advice about how to manage your account, please phone us on 1800 013 357.