

End of Season Newsletter

2017/18



**Goulburn Valley
orchardist,
and mother of
five boys, Rien
Silverstein has
been a pivotal
advocate and
leader for women
and agriculture.**

Read her story on page 18.

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April 2018

From the Managing Director



Our water deliveries are higher and inflows are lower than last year, making the management of our customer services and products a busy day-to-day operation for our people over the course of the 2017/18 irrigation season.

Of course we understand that our largest customer group, more than 12,300 irrigators, were just as busy ensuring they managed their farms, orchards and livestock enterprises with diligence over what has been an interesting and largely positive season for the heartbeat of our business – water availability.

We expected to enter the irrigation season on 15 August with our customers ready to irrigate. Very dry conditions in the months preceding the opening were quite different

to the wet winter experienced in 2016. Indeed, a flurry of 24/7 water orders after an unseasonably dry winter was fully anticipated. However some very welcome rain in the fortnight leading up to the opening led to a lot of cancelled deliveries (and a lot of delight) in seeing rain across the GMID and some of our storages returning to the healthy levels we enjoyed throughout the previous season.

Lake William Hovell, Lake Buffalo, Nillahcootie, Newlyn and Hepburns Lagoon all filled to capacity, as they usually do in good years. Lake Eildon didn't reach the heights of 2016 but did get to more than three-quarter capacity while Hume, Cairn Curran, Eppalock and Tullaroop also reached healthy levels.

Inflows and significant rain for the remainder of the 2017 calendar year were largely concentrated in the first week of December. This delivered extreme rainfall and difficult conditions for some in the GMW operations area but the widespread flooding feared by emergency services thankfully didn't eventuate as forecast. Indeed, the silver lining to the deluge was topped-up storages going into the New Year – though we all sympathise with the isolated but significant damage done to some of our customers' properties from this rare rain event.

Stable but fairly dry weather conditions in 2018 have meant steady deliveries. We're pleased to report that, by and large, our irrigation districts and their channels, infrastructure and our people behind the scenes have ensured this heavy delivery workload has gone very smoothly. In fact, overall deliveries in the GMID are running about 300GL higher (to the end of February) compared to this time last year. Deliveries across our Diversions business are also up by about 10 GL this year.

Other factors worth noting for the season have been the unfortunate outbreak of

blue-green algae in some of our storages, particularly in the south-west of the GMW operations area. While this was unwelcome for summer recreational users at Lake Eppalock, it is an environmental occurrence better communicated, understood and managed by all than in years past. We thank the relatively small number of our customers affected by algae outbreaks for their understanding of conditions beyond our control.

It has also been a busy year for the environmental water holders and managers who have been planning watering actions throughout the year, and achieving some exciting outcomes. We have a section in this newsletter about their activities.

In terms of recreational activities, none have been affected as we have had no particularly low water levels over the course of 2017/18. While storages are always first and foremost in the service of our irrigators and other water entitlement holders, it is always welcome to have a season such as this where we can all enjoy the benefits of healthy water levels in our dams, weirs and lakes.

This introduction to our End of Season newsletter has largely dealt with storage volumes and their impact on water delivery operations. Water availability is at the heart of what we do and our capacity to deliver. Having higher inflows in the good years helps us to effectively manage the dry years.

Apart from up-to-date storage levels in this newsletter, we also provide some important and timely advice and information on: how to plan your winter water supply before the end of season; how to easily sign up and enjoy the convenience of our online and mobile services; a “heads up” to our scheduled list of channel and infrastructure works over winter and more.

To add some personality to this practical information, we include a profile on Rien

Silverstein who also graces our newsletter cover. Rien, a mother-of-five and former midwife, was never content to be known as a “farmer’s wife” for the family orchard at East Shepparton. Today, she is a leader and advocate for women in agriculture and an inspiration to us all - we hope you enjoy this customer profile.

It’s important to mention the delivery in February of the Strategic Advisory Panel’s (SAP) report. The Minister for Water and our Board have acknowledged the importance of the report and GMW has now established a Transformation Panel to support the business progressing its recommendations. Over coming weeks GMW will establish Project Teams to work on implementing changes in the business to ensure long-term affordable prices for customers.

Finally, our thanks to customers at the end of a very busy irrigation season. We hope you gain a lot from the information in this newsletter, take advantage of our services and join us in looking forward to a prosperous and productive 2018/19 season.

Pat Lennon,
Managing Director

Seasonal Outlook 2018/19

The volumes in storage across northern Victoria and current climate drivers point to a generally positive outlook for water availability in 2018/19.

The Northern Victorian Resource Manager (NVRM) makes seasonal determinations and prepares outlooks on behalf of the entitlement holders in the northern Victorian regulated water systems. The announcements are issued regularly during the water year to help customers make their seasonal watering plans.

Seasonal determinations are derived by comparing the water volume available in storage and from expected inflows against the volume needed to meet delivery commitments through the year.

The Resource Manager announces seasonal determinations when water availability is greater than the delivery commitment. Customers receive an allocation based on a percentage of their entitlement, with the seasonal determination providing the percentage.

Outlooks provide entitlement holders with a guide of possible water availability through the year. The Resource Manager uses historical

information to present availability under different weather conditions, so entitlement holders can decide on their own level of risk.

Under average inflow conditions, the Resource Manager expects 100 per cent of high-reliability water shares (HRWS) to be announced in all systems by mid-October 2018. This means that average storage inflows will secure all high-reliability entitlements for 2018/19.

When issuing the current outlook on 15 February 2018, the Resource Manager said 2017/18 inflows had been lower than during the previous year. This meant the current outlooks for water availability were lower than 12 months ago.

The current seasonal determination, made on Thursday 15 March 2018, had all systems at 100 per cent HRWS. The seasonal determinations for low-reliability water shares stood at 0 per cent in the Murray, Goulburn and Loddon systems, 58 per cent in the Campaspe system and at 100 per cent in the Broken and Bullarook systems. The final seasonal determination update for 2017/18 will be announced on Tuesday 3 April 2018.

The Resource Manager will announce the opening seasonal determinations for all northern Victorian systems on Monday 2 July 2018.



Regulator gates.

Everything you need to know about risk of spill

In the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe irrigation systems, entitlement holders are able to carryover up to 100 per cent of their High and Low Reliability Water Shares.

This may mean entitlement holders can have more than their total water share volume in a given season for personal use or trade.

If this happens, then the volume of water above a customer's High and Low Reliability Water Share is quarantined in a spillable water account.

This water is subject to what is termed 'risk of spill'.

In other words, the water may be lost if the storage in the system fills and spills. Lake Hume stores for the Murray system, Lake Eildon for the Goulburn system and Lake Eppalock to the Campaspe system.

The Northern Victoria Resource Manager (NVRM) assesses the chances of the storages spilling in these systems on the 10th day of each month.

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

If there is a spill, the Resource Manager will deduct a proportion of all the spillable water accounts based on the volume that is spilled from the storage.

The Resource Manager will announce the first risk of spill assessment for the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe systems on Monday 2 July 2018.

It's time to plan your winter water supply



Each year we drain many of our channels during the non-irrigation period (16 May to 14 August) so we can conduct important Winter Works.

Due to this draining, we cannot guarantee reliable water supply.

Please ensure you have an alternate water supply and fill your water tanks or dams before 15 May.

The non-irrigation period is typically a time we carry out important Winter Works, such as weed control, channel maintenance, infrastructure repairs and replacement to ensure the efficient delivery of water to you during the irrigation period.

This Winter Works Program may mean you will see more traffic, earth-moving equipment and heavy vehicles operating in your area.

Please be aware of the increased traffic, obey all signs and drive safely.

For safety reasons, public access to these work sites is not allowed.

Please note this message applies generally to our customers who receive supply from our channel network.

GMW Winter Works

There is a busy Winter Works season ahead for our customers.

Our 2018 Winter Works program kicks off in May to complete a range of works across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

This year the Campaspe Siphon Relining Project will be a key focus, which will see the existing siphon relined with reinforced concrete.

The siphon, constructed in the early 1900s, features three barrels which allow water from the Waranga Western Channel to cross the Campaspe River without interference.

Ongoing patch works have taken place in previous years but this will be the first time since construction that significant relining works have taken place.

The current siphon has reached the end of its serviceable life and the works will ensure an important asset for GMW to continue to operate and provide service to both Rochester and Loddon Valley.

The relining work will be carried out by contractor ITS Pipe Tech with the project costing an estimated \$3 million. This is significantly less than the estimated cost of replacing the whole structure, which is in the vicinity of \$12 million.

“GMW will manage the contractors involved, who will design and construct the relining works,” Lead Project Manager Linc Wellington said.

“This project is requiring a fair bit of coordination between our Rochester and Loddon Valley teams. There is an opportunity to complete these works in one winter which would potentially save costs. It would also save the need for dewatering the channel again and means less interruption to supply.”

The Campaspe Siphon Relining Project works are planned to take place between 18 May and 6 August.

Work on the Bull Siphon, 5km east of the Campaspe Siphon, is another key project for GMW this winter.

GMW will carry out the design and construction work on the siphon, which is a drainage depression. Similar to the Campaspe Siphon, it was also constructed in the early 1900s.

“The siphon is at the end of its serviceable life and due for some attention. It is 30m long and has six barrels which are 2.7m in diameter each,” Mr Wellington said.

“We’ll be reducing the barrels from six to four and replacing the pipe diameter with 3m pipe.

New use for channel silt

This year, GMW is trialling some innovations as part of its linear works program to reduce costs.

The project involves utilising silt material removed from channels and reusing it on the back of the channel bank. This means there is no need for imported materials.

“We make it an access bank,” Mr Wellington said.

“The silt material comes out wet, so we let it dry for a period of time before being reused. The inside of the channel is then lined with rocks (rock-armouring) and the intention is to extend the life of the assets for 80 to 100 years.”

The trial has taken place in the Central Goulburn and Murray Valley areas, with a program being developed.



We'll be removing the structure and making it longer to open up the drainage waterway."

At present, the water which crosses the siphon through the drainage depression can sometimes overtop and spill into the channel during a flood event, or it can erode the surrounding banks.

"By carrying out these works we will provide more of a natural flow for this water," Mr Wellington said.

The project will cost about \$2 million.

In Murray Valley, key projects this winter will include replacement of a road crossing at Yourang Rd, estimated to cost \$255,000, and replacement of a road crossing on the Murray Valley Number 1 Channel, estimated to cost \$270,000. This will see new box culverts installed, measuring 1800mm high and 3600mm wide.

In Shepparton, works are due to be carried out on the East Goulburn Number Two Siphon. This is a 151m siphon which is due to be replaced with pipes and two large headwalls. Works are estimated to cost \$420,000.

A significant amount of other work has already taken place this year as part of GMW's summer structures program.

This includes a completed drainage structure at Tonkin Rd, Undera which cost \$134,000 and a culvert at McKenzie Rd, Ardmona which is estimated to cost \$221,000. The culvert works are due to start early to mid-March.

In Rochester, summer structures works have included two projects on the 'RO drain 6' – works at Doherty Rd and Everard Rd.

Structure works

GMW's planned work on structures is estimated to cost \$10.5 million in the 2017/18 financial year. This includes work on 100 structures – with some work already started.

By mid-February, works were yet to start on 58 of these structures, with about 40 of these jobs due to take place during winter. This work is split relatively evenly across GMW's region with prioritisation of assets that need replacing or refurbishment.

About \$7 million to \$8 million is due to be spent during the entire Winter Works period (15 May to 15 August), with eight crews assigned for GMW's winter program.

Linear works

GMW's planned linear works (channel remodelling) is estimated to cost \$11.4 million in the 2017/18 financial year. By mid-February, about \$5 million of this had been spent. Linear works are carried out year-round.

There are currently six crews carrying out linear works, with the hope to continue these crews into the winter period.



Bulls siphon being upgraded last winter.

What to do with your carryover

As the end of the irrigation season nears, there are several choices to consider in relation to unused water you may have.

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) has entered 2018 in a relatively strong position. For those customers who won't use all of their allocation, it's important to understand the options available for unused water.

You may trade your water as long as it is within the trading rules and there is sufficient water in your account. You can also find a buyer or use a water broker to find one for you. We provide links to application forms and information on end of season water trading on our website. Trade applications must be lodged with us by 27 June (or 30 June if you plan to apply online).

Some customers have the option of carrying over their unused water. Carryover refers to the process that permits water entitlement holders to take their unused water allocation from this irrigation season into the next season.

It ensures early water availability in the season for the individual.

Please note to carryover your water, your unused allocation must be in an Allocation Account (ABA) linked to your water share and within the carryover limits for your water system.

Carryover is available to water entitlement holders on the Goulburn, Murray, Campaspe, Broken, Loddon and Bullarook systems. These systems have different carryover rules to match their specific entitlements and hydrology:

- Customers in the **Goulburn (Zone 1A, 1B & 3), Murray (Zone 6, 6B & 7) and**

Campaspe (Zone 4A & 4C) systems can carryover 100 per cent of all High and Low Reliability Water Shares linked to their allocation bank account.

- Customers in the **Broken system (Zone 2)** can carry over 50 per cent of High Reliability Water Shares.
- Customers in the **Bullarook and Loddon systems (Zone 5A & 5B)** can carryover 50 per cent of their High Reliability Water Shares and 50 per cent of their Low Reliability Water Shares.
- Please note carryover is not available to water entitlement holders in the Ovens and King systems.

The last day for entitlement holders to ensure the water they intend to carryover is in a linked ABA is 27 June.

Customers may also choose to relinquish their remaining allocation if they do not wish to use, trade or carryover their unused water. There is no charge to relinquish unused water.

To relinquish water, applications must be lodged with us by 27 June (or 30 June if you wish to apply online).

For more information about carryover, calculating, using, trading or relinquishing water allocations, visit our website at www.gmwater.com.au/endofseason, the Victorian Water Register website www.waterregister.vic.gov.au, or phone our Customer Service Centre on 1800 013 357.

For further information on Groundwater and Unregulated Surface water trading, please visit our website at www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/water-trading.

For a list of all key dates for the season, please see page 23.

Connections Project

Planning and preparation works are underway for another significant Winter Works period for the Connections Project, as it accelerates towards completion in 2020.

This year, an annual program of works valued at more than \$200 million will be carried out across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) to improve and upgrade ageing infrastructure.

The Project will carry out works year round in consultation with landowners – this means connecting more people to the modernised delivery network sooner.

Of course the majority of works will be completed during the winter shut-down period and this year.

The scope for 2018 is expected to include:

- Installing 188 automated regulators.
- Remediating 35km of channel.

- Constructing about 65km of pipeline.

This year's significant works program shows the Reset Delivery Plan is continuing to deliver on its promises, with landowners continuing to see plenty of action on the ground.

These upgrades will create a more efficient delivery network using advanced technologies which are fit for purpose and encourage the region's producers to improve on-farm efficiency.

Works will also create economic boosts for communities across the region – from contractors to manufacturers to service providers.

These works are also contributing towards resolving long-standing issues – since March 2016, we've resolved more than 350 complex legacy issues.

The \$2 billion Connections Project is funded by the Victorian and Australian governments and will create a world class irrigation network to improve efficiency and create a sustainable future.



Planning is underway for another works period.

Your guide for enjoying our waterways

We've been updating our Recreation Guides in recent months to provide key information for visitors and locals on boating, camping, fishing and recreation facilities at each of our water storages.

Our new-look Recreation Guides, printed on waterproof paper, are now available for Lake Eildon, Cairn Curran Reservoir, Lake Buffalo, Lake Eppalock, Lake William Hovell and Waranga Basin.

Each guide includes a boating and facilities map, on-water speed restrictions where

applicable, safety information and key hazards to be aware of.

GMW General Manager Customers Operations Scott Barber said the guides serve as a 'one-stop-shop' for all basic information about each water storage.

"It still has the boating guide and map similar to the last one, but contains greater detail and reminders on the hazards to be aware of," Mr Barber said.


The guides can be found on our website at www.g-mwater.com.au/recreation-tourism/recreation-guides or you can request a hard copy from GMW. These guides are also available at each of the water storages.

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




Dear Chloe,

Welcome to GMW eNews - a monthly digest of customer updates and important information, profiles, news, water safety tips, information on local area operations, upcoming events and much more.


Your top things to know across the region this month:

- Seymour Alternative Farming Expo starts today
- Thinking about trading your allocation? Find out more
- Reminder notices sent out in Loddon Valley
- Use MyGMW to check your account online



See you at Seymour

The Seymour Alternative Farming Expo starts today and runs throughout the weekend. GMW will have a stall at the event, so feel free to stop by and have a chat with us!



Trading your allocation

Keen to know more about trading your water allocation? It's important you know and understand your options

Storage levels and storage inflows

The volume of water that flowed into the major storages, referred to as inflows, from July 2017 to January 2018 was below the long-term average.

Lake Eildon received 73 per cent and Cairn Curran only received 21 per cent of the long-term average.

While inflows were below average, storage levels increased over the winter and spring

which is the time of year when storage levels usually rise. Buffalo, William Hovell, Nillahcootie, Newlyn and Hepburn's Lagoon were the only storages to fill to 100 per cent capacity.

Inflows into the Loddon and Campaspe storages were very low compared to a wet 2016 and water stored has been needed to meet downstream demand.

As a result, storage levels have already fallen below where they were before the winter and spring inflows.

Storage	Lowest storage percentage during winter/spring	Highest storage percentage in 2017/18	Storage percentage at 15 February 2018	July 2017 to January 2018 inflows (GL)	July to January inflows (percentage of average)
Hume	58.6%	91.3%	57.5%	1062.4	52%
Dartmouth	77.6%	89.2%	89.0%	490.9	69%
Buffalo	45.3%	100%	78.6%	207.5	64%
William Hovell	72.4%	100%	88.4%	105.0	70%
Eildon	61.1%	75.9%	69.5%	866.3	73%
Nillahcootie	76.6%	100%	83.8%	16.7	33%
Eppalock	88.3%	94.2%	75.9%	44.5	34%
Cairn Curran	74.2%	80.5%	68.2%	20.0	21%
Tullaroop	72.3%	79.4%	66.7%	10.7	23%



Don't drink the water

Customers are reminded that water supplied by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated.

This includes water supplied at some of our parks adjacent to weirs and storages.

GMW only supplies raw (untreated) water for irrigation, stock and domestic purposes. 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.

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 (for example, through a public tap).

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 and 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.

Check out our new interactive blue-green algae updates and alerts page here on our website www.g-mwater.com.au/news/bga

Further information is available by phoning reception on 1800 013 357 or by emailing reception@gmwater.com.au

Prosecution shows water theft doesn't pay

An individual recently convicted for breaches of the Water Act 1989 has been described by an Echuca Magistrate as someone who has "disregard for the law" and "needs a penalty that will put a sting in his tail".

A man and his wife appeared in Echuca Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 28 February, charged with breaching sections 288 and 289 of the Water Act 1989.

The man took water to which he was not entitled to by sabotaging a Dethridge wheel.

Magistrate Dr Michael King said this was a betrayal to the local community.

"This is the last chance and little will be able to be said if there is a next time to avoid imprisonment. People are doing the right thing and others are sponging off the system," Magistrate King said.

"(The man) manipulated an irrigation scheme that has been set up for the benefit of the community and depends on integrity and trust."

The man was fined \$15,000 with conviction and ordered to pay Goulburn-Murray Water's costs, as well as compensation for the water. The woman was fined \$3000 plus costs and compensation for the water.

GMW Solicitor Jaclyn Cameron said the outcome was a good result for the water authority and the irrigation community it serves.

"We will prosecute cases of water theft. Stealing water is not worth the risk," she said.

Managing Director Pat Lennon agreed and said the successful prosecution demonstrates that water theft will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

"The vast majority of our irrigators do the right thing. We're sure they would appreciate GMW's efforts to ensure compliance from all water users," he said.

Strong season for irrigators

Amid the uncertainties generated by ongoing discussions about water recovery for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) irrigation customers largely enjoyed a strong season on the back of drier early conditions and healthy water availability through much of the year.

Demand kicked off in August as irrigators looked to finish winter pastures and crops following dry conditions in early winter. This pattern contrasted starkly against the very wet conditions in the previous year, when demand remained very low until late October.

Water orders remained mostly constant through the year, slowed only by occasional rainfall such as the large event that affected parts of the Goulburn Murray Water Irrigation District (GMID) during December 2017. At the time of preparation, demand was on track to exceed the 2016/17 delivery total.

This season has also been notable for extended periods of trade restriction, primarily

for the Goulburn to the Murray systems and across the Barmah Choke in the Murray system.

Allocation trade from the Goulburn to the Murray ceased in early July 2017 as the 200 GL limit on the net trade balance was reached.

It has remained closed despite the MDBA calling for resource deliveries to the Murray out of the inter-valley trade account, which has historically lowered the net balance.

Complications arose with the use of tagged allocation accounts, which allow use of water around the trade limit. GMW is working with Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on ways to manage the pressures of trade and tagged use and ensure the long-term retention of entitlements within the GMID.

The Barmah Choke remained closed to trade from upstream to downstream reaches (that is, from zone 6 to zone 7) due to the continued growth of demand in the lower River Murray near the SA border.

By limiting trade, the MDBA was able to reduce the need to pass water through the Barmah Forest to meet delivery commitments downstream of the forest.



Groundwater and unregulated diversions customers

Are you using WaterLINE?

WaterLINE is Goulburn-Murray Water's (GMW) online and telephone water ordering system.

It allows you to place irrigation orders, communicate with us and monitor your water usage based on the allocation and entitlement you hold.

For groundwater and unregulated diversions customers, you can use WaterLINE to maintain and update your contact details for messages, and view your Water Usage report which outlines entitlement, allocation and usage.

Visit the WaterLINE page on our website for more information or to access the portal at <https://www.g-mwater.com.au/customer-services/waterline>.

What is Watermatch?

Watermatch is an online forum where people can advertise trade water licence entitlement.

The forum can assist groundwater and unregulated surface water licence holders in Goulburn-Murray Water's (GMW) region.

You can access the Watermatch website by visiting <http://www.watermatch.com.au/> and selecting **Goulburn-Murray Water**. You can then select the **trading zone** you are interested in and **browse existing posts**.

For more information, visit the Watermatch website <http://www.watermatch.com.au/> or call GMW on 1800 013 357.

Please note that GMW is not a water broker and cannot match buyers and sellers or provide advice on the price of water.

For further information on groundwater and unregulated surface water trading, please visit our website at <https://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/water-trading>.

Handy rosters and restrictions tool

For our unregulated diversions customers, head to our website to check the status of any rosters or restrictions in place on a stream.

The tool will allow you to select a region or catchment, select a stream and view any current restrictions on unregulated water access.

Streams that do not have a specific Local Management Rule have a minimum threshold of 3ML/day applied.

Customers are required by their licences to take water in accordance with any rosters and restrictions on their stream. It is an offence to take and use water at a level exceeding any roster or restriction.

For more information about specific streams, please contact your local diversion inspector on 1800 013 357.

Visit the rosters and restrictions page here at www.g-mwater.com.au/rosters-and-restrictions.

GMW reads meters during May and June each season. If you are a surface water and/or groundwater customer who would like to use entitlement during May or June, please remember to order your requirements or contact your local diversion inspector. If you use water after 30 April, please remember to advise your local diversion inspector by Friday 22 June 2018. This will ensure all meter readings are finalised by the end of the 2017/18 season. Failure to do so will result in any usage being accounted for against your 2018/19 usage.

Environmental water benefits across our region

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

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) helps the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) and catchment management authorities to deliver water for the environment to rivers and wetlands in the region.

The VEWH's current Seasonal Watering Plan 2017/18 has delivered more than 480,000 ML of water – released from Hume as well as the Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon systems – to rivers and wetlands in the GMW area during the first six months of the watering season, from July to December 2017.

Check out the wonderful benefits to the environment, below.



Innovative alternatives for weed eradication across your region

Endothall is a relatively new herbicide in the battle against submerged aquatic weeds in Australia.

It has been used successfully in the United States for decades – and now too across the region by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) to improve water delivery to our customers.

All aquatic weed control using herbicide comes with its challenges, governed by legislation.

GMW also faces its own challenges such as accessing the thousands of kilometres of channel system we operate.

While we can run the system without the need to reach all of it, weeds will grow wherever they please.

Submerged aquatic weeds are especially difficult to control as they have no exposed surfaces to which you can apply typical herbicides.

What we had been searching for was a herbicide that was active in water, lasted long enough to be effective but not long enough to cause residue issues, was effective against aquatic weeds but not against agricultural and horticultural crops, and didn't present human health issues.

In the late 2000s, GMW investigated endothall usage in the US and helped establish a research program for its potential use in Australia.

Since then, GMW Aquatic Plant Services and research scientists from Agriculture Victoria (AV) conducted trials to determine its efficiency.

The data from these trials were then presented as part of an application to the Australian

Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) to have endothall registered for common use.

The results to date have been overwhelmingly positive.

In all trials, submerged weed growth has been significantly reduced, while having no impact on agricultural and horticultural activities.

This has resulted in a demonstrated increase in channel capacity and/or automated flow stability.

In winter 2017, a large portion of Shepparton's East Goulburn Main Channel was treated due to weed growth that had restricted channel flow by about 50 per cent (800 ML/day down to 400 ML/day). This season flow restrictions in that region due to weed growth were zero.

Endothall usage comes with its restrictions. Specific conditions are required which means winter applications during the non-irrigation period are the only option.

However, the future now holds the potential for flowing water or in-season injections with new water trials conducted.

The ability to use endothall during the irrigation season has huge potential – with warmer temperatures having a big positive influence on endothall efficiency.

Endothall applications during the summer period are expected to produce high levels of weed control, potentially with lower doses, and will reduce costs.

One of the biggest advantages of a flowing water treatment is that it is not necessary to access the entire system to reach all of the weeds – instead of a spray truck or spray operator with a hose taking the herbicide to the plant, we can let the water do it for us.

Goulburn Weir continues to make headlines

GMW recently had the pleasure of hosting National Museum of Australia curator Jilda Andrews who was visiting from Canberra.

Australia's premier museum is opening a new gallery in 2020 and the feature piece will be a large section of the original Goulburn Weir, including a cast iron gate, gantry and stonework.

The section was delivered to the museum by GMW about five years ago and represents very advanced engineering from the 1890s. It will help educate museum visitors about the introduction of irrigated agriculture to Australia and the immense changes brought to our regional towns, economy and geography.

It's the second time Goulburn Weir has made headlines in recent months – the first

of which was October last year when it was awarded international heritage status by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). Goulburn Weir is heralded as an engineering marvel of its time.

The international accolade saw the weir take its place in the history books alongside famous structures like the Aswan Dam in Egypt, which was bigger than anything the world had ever seen when initially completed in 1901. China's weirs and canals are also famous for having served civilisations for a thousand years or more.

Goulburn Weir was completed in 1891 and under the management of GMW, continues to supply properties in the Shepparton and Central Goulburn Irrigation Districts as well as filling the Waranga Basin water storage and forming Lake Nagambie.



National Museum of Australia curator Jilda Andrews at the weir.

Rien and the Goulburn Valley make a great pear



Rien Silverstein was never content to be known as a “farmer’s wife”. As a mother of five boys and formerly a trained midwife, Rien later found a passion as communicator, advocate and leader for women and in agriculture.

With a disability preventing her from physically helping husband Maurice on their Orrvale and Tatura orchards, Rien leaned on skillsets she had discovered through taking on various committee roles through her children’s schools and sporting clubs.

“Having had a lot of operations and recovery during my life, I had time. Time at night when the kids were asleep to read and to research,” Rien said.

“When the boys were at school, I started taking more of an interest in the orchard and I really jumped straight into it when I joined a (Goulburn-Murray Water) Water Services Committee in 1995.

“There was noticeably a lack of women represented on the committees and also, no real representation from the orchardist community in the Goulburn Valley so I felt like

it was important for me to step into this role and that is really where it all started.

“I knew that there had to be a way for me to get involved in our farm and the broader farming community and that has been through these various advocacy roles and in being a voice on behalf of others.”

After completing the Fairley Leadership program in 2002, Rien said her confidence, skills and networks in the community advocacy space really flourished. Her contributions to the community and farming industry have included representation on various board and executive panels such as the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and Fruitgrowers Victoria.

Crippling drought in the early 2000s gave Rien even more drive to be a voice on behalf of her community and to take issues affecting farmers of the Goulburn Valley up to all levels of government and to not only be heard, but to influence policy.

This included Rien’s work with the Horticulture Policy Council, the Victorian Government’s Drought Response Committee and with the Irrigation Futures project and beginnings of the now, GMW Connections Project – Australia’s largest irrigation modernisation project.

“Issues surrounding water were front of mind for everyone during the drought and as orchardists we faced a horrible reality,” Rien said.

“At one point our (water) allocation was 25 per cent and for the year we were buying in water for the equivalent of the cost of a house in Melbourne.

“We were getting into debt to buy water for our permanent plantings but producing less and to a lesser quality.”

Rien said during this time many women on the farm were taking on more of a role to manage the water and to become the decision-maker in this space.

“It became important to keep across the water situation and the market for buying and selling water and to know and understand all of the rules and policy to be that decision-maker,” Rein said.

“During the drought we set up the GV Women in Horticulture Group which was a huge success, bringing together like-minded women from across the region.”

The GV Women in Horticulture Group was supported by Fruitgrowers Victoria and aimed to see women recognised for their contributions and leadership within the industry and to support, inform, strengthen and promote women in the industry.

“We were able to run a few programs, including information sessions on water and the annual Pear Fest which first ran in 2002 attracting 700 people and in its second year saw 1500 people come through the gates,” she said.

“We had a calendar of events throughout the year, a mix of educational and information sessions, events to promote the industry and GV and networking opportunities.”

More recently, Rien has been involved in The Invisible Farmer Project <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/14480>, which seeks to address the historical and contemporary invisibility of Australian farming women and to celebrate the role that women play in sustaining Australian farms and rural communities. Through personal narratives the project tells the untold stories of women on the land, educates communities about the diverse, innovative and vital roles of women in agriculture and rural communities and encourages discussion about issues facing rural Australia and its future.

The project – an initiative of Museums Victoria – started as a pilot featuring oral history

interviews of nine key women who have made significant contributions to agriculture, farming and rural life. Rien was featured as one of these original interviews.

Now, the project has sought funding from the Australian Research Council and features almost 200 stories of Australian farming women on the ABC Open website open.abc.net.au.

Where Rien’s next venture lies, she is unsure. She still remains an executive committee member of the VFF and has recently joined the Country Women’s Association (CWA).

“I still feel like I’m not finished,” Rien said.

“There is a lot happening on the orchard and I am still doing the CFO type work, the financials and running of the business but my community work and contributing to the broader farming community has always given me something to focus on and get passionate about.

“Perhaps it is my background as a midwife but I want to help people and care about people and through these roles, that has been about helping people improve their farms.

“And I’ve seen a lot of change in my 30 years farming. The technology side to farming and irrigation has been taken up in gusto by farmers and not just by younger people – we’re all looking at ways to do it better and more efficiently.

“We have also seen change in the visibility and representation of women in agriculture and more broadly in leadership roles. Women have always been involved in farming, in many different ways and in many different cases have been doing the same work but they have been more invisible or behind the scenes. That is also changing.

“We just have some incredible people here in the GV doing incredible things on their farms and for the broader farming community. I feel lucky to have been a part of it and to call the Goulburn Valley home.”

Strategic working groups underway

During February we inducted 55 community members as part of our working groups which have been established to help carry out a number of major projects over the next 12 months. The working groups will coordinate with the transformation work.

The groups will assist with the development of the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) Asset Strategy and the Tariff and Pricing Strategy – both of which are major projects arising from GMW's Strategic Plan, released in September last year. The outcomes of this work will also feed into the Essential Services Commission (ESC) review of GMW's price structure from 2020.

The role of the GMID Asset Strategy Group will be to objectively provide input about the future service needs of customers within the GMID.

The Tariff and Pricing Review Working Groups are six groups based on the different services provided by GMW, which will advise on the future service needs of customers as they relate to service and pricing options, and customer understanding of what charges they would face for each option and why.

Both groups will also advise on GMW proposals to reduce the future cost of

maintaining and renewing assets; and opportunities to optimise on the use of assets within the GMID.

Recognising the importance of early, transparent and genuine engagement with customers, and through the engagement of independent consultants KPMG and InSync, we've invited our customer base to the table and have provided them with a genuine opportunity to now have input and influence on these important decisions.

Group members include representatives from Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), other water organisations that are urban water customers, 'retail' customers, environmental water holder customers and community members from across the region. Members from some of our Water Services Committees have also joined the working groups.

These 55 customers who've volunteered their time and expertise represent a real cross-section of our customer base, from large and small irrigators to domestic and stock customers, urban and bulk water users and environmental users. Many are Water Service Committee members who now combine their geographic representation of customers with these more service-oriented Working Groups.

We're looking forward to working with them over the next 12 months to deliver on these key projects.



Supply interruption alerts

If you're a customer in one of Goulburn Murray Water's (GMW) pumped irrigation, stock and domestic water districts or a Mokoan Pipeline Regulated Diverter, you will receive a text message when there is an interruption to your water supply. But only if we have your mobile number.

This service is provided so you have an opportunity to make alternative arrangements and minimise the impact on your property.

Planned interruptions

When we conduct planned maintenance or works a text message with the time and duration of planned interruption will be sent at least five days in advance.

Unplanned interruptions

If the interruption to your supply is unexpected Pumped Irrigation and Mokoan Pipeline customers will receive a text message with the estimated duration of the outage within two hours of the outage occurring.

Water District customers will receive a text if the outage will last two or more days.

You'll receive another text when the service has been restored.

To provide this service we will use the mobile number you have previously provided.

To update your details on our website, visit www.g-mwater.com.au/about/contact/updateyourdetails

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.

Customers on Stop Supply of water

Some customers' Allocation Accounts (ABAs) may have had a 'stop' placed on it due to having overdue accounts with GMW.

Until the associated outstanding fees are paid, or a payment plan has been entered into, all ABA's attached to either the customer or business name will have been stopped. This will prevent water being delivered against these accounts.

If a stop has been placed on your account, please contact the GMW Call Centre on 1800 013 357 to pay your account or to discuss a suitable payment arrangement.

Sign up for online and mobile services

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.

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, 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.

You can subscribe to eNews by visiting www.gmwater.com.au/subscribe

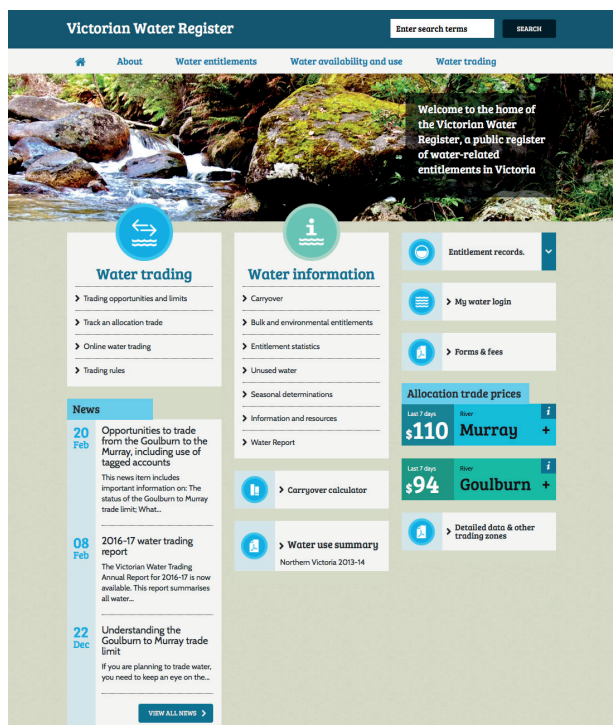


The **Dam email updates** provide you with water storage and dam levels information straight to your inbox on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

You can subscribe to e-dam levels by visiting www.gmwater.com.au/subscribe.



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



Please note these deadlines to make sure the water you use is deducted from the correct season's allocation. They also help you, and us, with next year's allocation planning.



Gravity customers last day to submit water orders to ensure delivery.



End of gravity irrigation season.



Last day to submit land applications and delivery share transfers.



Last day to submit water share applications.



Last day to submit manual applications to trade or relinquish allocations.



Last day to submit online applications to trade or relinquish allocations.

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 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



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 for information about our feedback process.

Please note this is also the process for feedback on the Connections Project.

GMW Customer Enquiries

Email

info@gmwater.com.au

Phone

1800 013 357

Website

gmwater.com.au



www.linkedin.com/company/goulburn-murray-water



@gmwater_lakes_dams



@GMWaterNews



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