



Welcome to our End of Season customer newsletter

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As the gravity irrigation season draws to a close for another year, our communities are enduring unprecedented challenges in the face of coronavirus (COVID-19). For the agricultural industry, which is now officially listed as an essential service, these challenges may reveal opportunities in coming months. The news that food production is one of the very few industries our country cannot survive without has been welcome news providing certainty and security for irrigators.

That's why our innovative and solutions focused team at GMW, is continuing to provide customers with a high level of service. Reliable supply and efficient operations tops our priority list. Our service has been seamless and business continuity plans a proven success as we continue to deliver essential irrigation water until the end of the gravity irrigation season on 15 May.

Despite consecutive years of below average rainfall, through careful planning and sustainable management of our water resources, seasonal determination for the 2019-20 season reached 80 per cent for the Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon systems, 100 per cent for the Bullarook system, 66 per cent in the Murray system and two per cent for the Broken system. Customers in some of these areas have also accessed groundwater to bolster irrigation volumes.

We understand that irrigation water is the lifeblood of our region. We know how important it is to ensure water remains available until the end of the irrigation season and we have been able to meet all customer demands with orders delivered when and where they are needed.

The volume of available water remained relatively unchanged since February and therefore this result is particularly pleasing; and a firm display of strategic planning and management. A final two per cent increase for three systems in April was thanks to cooler temperatures and the lingering benefits of a rain event in early March.

When I wrote to you last through this newsletter, I promised transformation at GMW. In March, the Essential Services Commission (ESC) released its draft decision in support of our

Pricing Submission that would see prices for most customers drop more than 10 per cent. After reviewing our forecast on costs and tariff reforms, the state's independent reviewer agreed we can maintain our high standards and commitment to reliable supply. Their draft decision was released in March and a final decision will be released in June and adopted in July.

This newsletter serves to update our customers on water management options as we near the end of this season. In it you'll find important information on carryover, trade and making the most of your unused water as well as important dates and deadlines.

When the gravity irrigation season officially ends, GMW will get busy with essential maintenance required during our program of Winter Works

I am proud of the changes taking place at GMW and the way our team has continued to operate under social distancing rules. During this period and when the new season opens on 15 August, I look forward to maintaining our commitment to customers as a credible business with; fair pricing, efficient operations, responsive services, and simple systems. Our aim is to protect the future prosperity of the region as a productive agricultural district.

Upcoming customer webinar

Over the course of the year there will be the opportunity to participate in a number of customer engagement activities. The first of which will be taking place at 2pm, Friday 15 May, where all the end-of-season options for unused water (described in this newsletter) and the Northern Victoria Resource Manager latest seasonal outlook will be presented. To register your interest for this session, and learn more about our 2020 Customer Engagement Program please visit www.g-mwater.com.au/your-say-at-gmw

Remember: GMW provides water entitlement holders with information about their end of irrigation season options as a courtesy. Customers are responsible for ensuring they take the necessary steps to carryover, use, sell or relinquish any unused water allocation by the appropriate deadlines.

Key dates and deadlines

 10 MAY	Last day to submit water orders to ensure delivery	 15 MAY	End of gravity irrigation season	 29 MAY	Final submissions for temporary transfer of groundwater applications	 29 MAY	Last day to submit land applications and delivery share applications	 15 JUNE	End of season accounts issued	 16 JUNE	Last day to submit water share applications
 16 JUNE	Last day to submit interstate allocation trades	 23 JUNE	Last day to submit manual applications to trade or relinquish allocations	 24 JUNE	Final season meter reads to be entered for Diversions customers	 30 JUNE	Last day to submit online applications to trade or relinquish allocations	 31 JULY	Last day to pay end of season accounts	 15 AUGUST	First day of the new irrigation season

Managing unused water

Customers need to know the options available for unused water. Taking action and meeting deadlines will ensure allocation is not written off. You can select from the following:

CARRYING OVER WATER

Some water entitlement holders can carry over their unused water allocation from one irrigation season, into the next season. Carrying over water means that the unused allocation is available to use or trade without the need to purchase and secures access to water at the start of the season. This option is open to entitlement holders in the Broken, Bullarook, Campaspe, Goulburn, Loddon and Murray systems only.

Remember: If you have unused water that you wish to carryover, it needs to be linked to a water share, limited term transfer of a water share, or supply by agreement before 16 June.

TRADING WATER

Water entitlement holders have the option of selling their unused water allocation through a trade. Water share and allocation trading in Victoria is governed by rules set by the Minister for Water. For more information visit

www.waterregister.vic.gov.au/water-trading

Water users can find a buyer themselves or engage a water broker or solicitor to find a buyer.

Remember: Online trades must be submitted by 30 June.

RELINQUISHING WATER

At no charge, water entitlement holders can return unused allocation to the consumptive pool. This may save on above entitlement storage fees.

Remember: To relinquish water, applications must be submitted with GMW by 23 June or 30 June if application is made online.

USING WATER

This means placing a final water order with GMW for the volume of water remaining.

Remember: To use your remaining water, the last day to submit a water order to ensure delivery is 10 May.

Diversions and groundwater customers

GMW has already started reading meters for diversions customers. Once a meter has been read, a sticker will be placed on the meter.

Applications for temporary transfer of groundwater are to be submitted prior to 29 May. Applications made after this date may not be processed due to the expected number of applications submitted at the end of the season.

Remember: If you are using water after final meter read has taken place you need to notify the Diversion Inspectors before 24 June. Failure to do so will result in any usage being recorded against your 2020/21 usage.

Key services

MyGMW Manage your GMW account online, anytime and anywhere, through our secure online portal MyGMW. Access MyGMW from our website at www.gmwater.com.au/customer-services/manage-my-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. Access WaterLINE by visiting www.gmwater.com.au/waterline



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



Our dams email provides water storage and dam levels information straight to your inbox on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Subscribe by visiting www.gmwater.com.au/subscribe

Don't forget to fill your domestic and stock dam

The irrigation season ends on 15 May and will begin again on 15 August. During the irrigation off season, GMW cannot guarantee that you will have access to water from the channel network for Domestic and Stock purposes due to channel maintenance requirements.

This irrigation off season we will be lowering more channels than we have previously to enable the crucial maintenance of our channel network, including the repairing of damaged banks and also the maintenance of weeds and silt which are impacting the delivery of water during the irrigation season.

Remember: Fill your tanks and dams before 15 May to secure your winter water.

Winter works

This winter shut-down period our maintenance teams will be completing essential works on our assets while maintaining appropriate social distancing. These works may include weed control, channel maintenance, infrastructure repairs and replacement to ensure the efficient delivery of water to customers during the irrigation period. This may mean there will be an increased use of trucks and heavy machinery on minor roads through the GMID and the community is urged to exercise care.

GMW is an essential service and will continue to complete essential work where it is safe to do so.

Payment plan options

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

Regardless of whether our customers are experiencing temporary or long term financial difficulties, or hardship resulting from Coronavirus (COVID-19), we will work with you to help find a solution to best suits your unique needs.

A range of hardship guidelines and payment options are available. These include but are not limited to: instalment options, early payment discounts, flexible payment plans and payment extensions.