



Customer Newsletter

Central Goulburn Operations

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Inside this issue:

Processing of Water Trades Improving	2
State Government Delivers Drought Assistance	2
G-MW Responds to FoodBowl Steering Committee Report	2
Water Resource Position	3
Residential Water Use	3
Access to Stock & Domestic Supplies	3
Seasonal Allocation 35%	3
Domestic & Stock Entitlements now subject to allocations	3
Response to Low Supply	3
Channel Upgrades	4
Reconfiguration	4

From the Central Goulburn Water Service Committee Chairman

We continue to face difficult times with very low final allocations on the cards. Your Water Services Committee has advocated strongly for government assistance and was pleased that the state government has agreed to pay for pumping of Waranga Basin (this contributes 7% to the current allocation) and help with payment of fixed water charges. Every bit helps.

We have completed a submission to the **Foodbowl** Steering Committee. While we do not support a pipeline to Melbourne we do want to see our infrastructure upgraded and services improved. The level of investment required is beyond the capacity of customers. We have provided significant comment on various aspects of the proposals with a view to improving outcomes and assisting Central Goulburn customers. A copy of the response is available on request from the Area office by phoning 5833 5705.

I would like to welcome our new committee members Peter Costello (dairy farmer from Tongala), Ray Sellwood (mixed farmer from Undera), Paul Quirk and Ken Wood (dairy farmers from Byrneside). Their commitment of time and effort to advocate and help improve things on behalf of all customers is appreciated. They have already attended several meetings and I look forward to their ongoing participation

New Operations Manager — Kevin Preece

I would like to welcome our new manager Mr. Kevin Preece.

Kevin has been appointed to replace Graham Smith who retired in July. Kevin was previously Operations Manager for the Murray Valley Irrigation Area and has worked with Goulburn-Murray Water in various operations and technical roles including on farm advice, research and engineering design.

Kevin has a strong focus on improving customer service and delivery efficiency while maintaining a strong control on costs.



Ross Crawford
Chairman Central Goulburn WSC

Central Goulburn Water Services Committee

(Chairman)

Ross Crawford 5854 8356

(Deputy Chairman)

Kelvin Bruce 5826 0442

Gerardo Fasano 5824 1128

Murray McDonald 5484 6226

Ray Sellwood 5826 0322

Paul Quirk 5824 2589

Peter Costello 5859 0557

Ken Wood 5855 2481

Staff Safety is Our Priority

G-MW cannot make it rain, but it is endeavouring to share the available water as fairly and equitably as possible.

G-MW recognises that the continuing drought conditions are putting customers under extreme stress and hardship, but as a responsible employer we must protect our staff. We cannot tolerate aggressive behaviour against staff trying to do their jobs and any such actions will be reported to the police.

G-MW thanks all of its customers for their continuing understanding and co-operation during this very difficult period.

Processing of Water Trades Improving

Our regions move to a more flexible and responsive water trading environment has coincided with the worst drought on record, and as a result exceptionally high water prices. These factors have significantly increased the number and urgency for many customers in having their water transactions approved.

Customers should allow at least 10 working days for their G-MW applications to be approved and longer for inter-authority / interstate transactions. Obviously there are individual applications that are more complex and have required longer processing times, especially application involving transactions outside the G-MW region.

Since July, G-MW has received more than 5,000 applications for water share and allocation trade, at least four times the number we receive at this stage in a normal year. We are also working with DSE and other Water Authorities to smooth out the remaining 'teething' issues.

Tips for applying and tracking your water trades

1. Record your application number. This makes it easier to track your application from when its received by G-MW through to its approval.
2. Check you water balance on WaterLINE to ensure you have enough water for the transaction.
3. Complete every field on the application form including your Allocation Bank Account number (ABA)
4. If you are trading as a company, make sure you provide a current company extract with your application.
5. Signatures - either the authorised agent or every owner of the water share must sign the original form before it is submitted. (Forms to nominate an authorised agent are available www.g-mwater.com.au)

State Government Delivers Drought Assistance

The State Government's very welcome drought relief package includes rebates for fixed water charges and funds to cover the cost of pumping Waranga Basin.

The account you receive this month will already include the Government's rebate, with the amount indicated by a negative sign on your bill.

A leaflet detailing where you can access further information about other State and Federal assistance has also been included with customer accounts, and we encourage all customers to explore their options for assistance during such a difficult year.

G-MW Responds to FoodBowl Steering Committee Report

Last month G-MW provided its response to the FoodBowl Steering Committee. Our submission builds on:

- Our experience in irrigation infrastructure management and in undertaking a range of reconfiguration and modernisation projects, and
- Our desire to ensure the efficient and effective management of the overall irrigation network once the project is complete.

Alongside a range of detailed suggestions, G-MW recommended four key areas be addressed as the project proceeds.

1. Customer perceptions and expectations need to be aligned, especially with regard to supply, service and ongoing operating costs of a modernised system
2. The Project's outcomes need to remain effective over the longer term – potentially the next 100 years.
3. Existing Government agencies and legislation including other state and Federal water reform agendas need to be reflected in any proposed approach
4. The project must aim to maximize the proportion of the \$1 billion that is spent on infrastructure upgrades, and minimise management and overheads.

When the Final Report is released we will review our programs to align them with the Food bowl Modernisation program. We expect there will still be some detail to be worked through but the FoodBowl Steering Committee's Final Report will provide a starting point for an exciting new vision for our region, with the local expertise, financial support and community leadership to see it delivered.



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Water Resource Position

The Goulburn storages have reported well-below average rainfall in recent months. Only 18.8 mm of rain was recorded at Lake Eildon and 5.8 mm was recorded at Waranga Basin during October.

Good rains occurred at the start of November, although warm and dry conditions have since dominated. By 14 November, rainfall totals were 40.8 mm at Lake Eildon and 29.4 mm at Waranga Basin.

The early November rainfall provided useful inflows to the Goulburn storages, after October inflows were less than one-quarter of the monthly average.

Storage	This year (14 Nov)	Last year
Lake Eildon	829.6GL (24.9%)	528.7GL (15.9%)
Waranga basin	138.1GL (31.9%)	155.9GL (36.0%)
Greens Lake	13.1GL (40.4%)	9.2GL (28.5%)

Residential Water Use

Customers (including syndicates) with metered use can choose to water lawns and gardens. If the use is not metered, Goulburn-Murray Water deems an annual use. Under the current drought conditions, Goulburn-Murray Water has decided to restrict deemed use to garden watering only.

If customers with deemed use wish to water lawns, enough allocation must be obtained to cover the additional water use. Syndicates without metered use should also restrict watering, or obtain sufficient allocation to cover lawn watering.

Use in excess of the permitted volume will incur an overuse fee of \$2,000 per ML.

Seasonal Allocation 35%

The Goulburn system seasonal allocation is now 35% of high reliability water shares. Inflows to Lake Eildon following rainfall in early November supported the recent improvement.

Gravity irrigation customers are reminded that the season will now close on the 15 May 2008 after being initially shortened to boost early season allocations.

Operational Response to Low Supply

G-MW is constantly monitoring and adjusting its operations to ensure we run in line with the season.

We are operating at around 60 percent of normal staff levels with many of our area staff redeployed to project areas in G-MW.

In contrast we have more than doubled our staffing levels to meet the massive increase in water trading applications.

Access to Domestic and Stock Supplies

G-MW is aware that the extremely dry conditions are affecting an increasing number of customers and will assist those in need as much as possible. Customers wishing to cart water from a G-MW channel need to be aware that water cannot be taken without prior approval.

Anyone seeking water for their essential domestic and stock needs should contact G-MW to find out the conditions, the location of designated safe access points and the fees that apply.

A public standpipe network coordinated through Local Government is also in place across Goulburn-Murray's region to provide access to water for essential household and stock requirements.

This is part of the State Government's drought response measures and customers seeking to cart water should also consider this source.

Domestic and Stock Entitlements now subject to Seasonal Allocations

Before 1 July 2007, domestic and stock entitlements in the Goulburn system were not affected by allocation and the full volume was always available for use.

With the conversion of domestic and stock entitlements to water shares through unbundling, all customer entitlements in the Goulburn system are now subject to the seasonal allocation.

For example, a customer with a 10 ML domestic and stock entitlement before unbundling now has a 10 ML high-reliability water share, of which they can access 35% or 3.5ML under the current allocation. This change brings the Goulburn system in line with all other systems managed by Goulburn-Murray Water.

Customers should plan use of their domestic and stock needs on the basis of the seasonal allocation.

Reconfiguration Underway in Central Goulburn

Reconfiguration planning has commenced in the Central Goulburn Area.

Reconfiguration is the process of reviewing and re-investing in infrastructure to meet the changing water supply needs of irrigators.

Reconfiguration planning is part of Goulburn-Murray Water's overall modernisation programs and is an important step prior to significant investment in upgrades such as the Foodbowl modernisation proposals.

Detailed Infrastructure Reconfiguration Plans, down to a specific channel level, will be developed. These plans will provide a framework for managing irrigation infrastructure over the next 30 years.

A key part of the process is community engagement. All customers are encouraged to be involved in the reconfiguration program as it rolls out.

Public Meetings

The Central Goulburn Reconfiguration Working Group recently held a series of community meetings. The meetings were well supported with over 200 members of the community attending.

Working Group

A working group has been formed from community stakeholders to oversee and guide the process.

Below: The Central Goulburn Working Group with G-MW Managing Director Russell Cooper inspecting a potential reconfiguration option for a spur channel east of Tatura.



WaterLINE Meter Reading Entry

Waterline now allows customers to enter their own meter readings and better manage their entitlement.

This new feature is available on the phone (web later on) and is under option #7. It will allow the customer to enter a meter reading, find out a meter reading, find out a start of season meter reading and also find out entitlement remaining.

For more information contact your planner via Waterline on 5833 5577.

Central Goulburn 1, 2, 3 & 4 channel upgrade project

The next phase of the Central Goulburn modernisation will commence soon.

Regulator and outlet automation are in place on the CG 2 channel system, and this was followed by the automation of all regulators on the CG 1, 3, and 4 channel systems.

The final stage of the project includes;

- Rationalisation of under-utilised infrastructure with a target to decommission 15 km of channel bank and 177 meter outlets (20%).
- Upgrading all remaining meter outlets on the CG 1, 3, and 4 channels with modern electronic meters.
- Remediation of high loss sections of channel including plastic lining, channel remodelling and pipelining.

The total project cost is estimated to be \$42.8million and is fully funded by State and Federal governments.

The project is estimated to deliver 17,600 megalitres of water savings to improve environmental outcomes for Victorian rivers.

All works are due to be completed by December 2008.

Customer consultation will commence soon with small "pod" or channel system meetings to be held in November. Customers will receive invitations to attend these meetings in the mail.