

Customer Newsletter

Pyramid-Boort Operations

November 2007



Inside this issue:

- G-MW Responds to FoodBowl Domestic & Stock Entitlements now subject to Seasonal Allocations
- Staff Safety is Our Priority
- Channel Leaks
- Processing of Water Trades Improving
- Waterline Meter Reading Entry
- Waterline Ordering on the WEB
- State Government Delivers Drought Assistance
- Coordination of Deliveries for Domestic & Stock Use
- G-MW Zero tolerance on illegal diversions and water theft

Staff Changes

Congratulations to Sandra Schroen on being appointed Operations Manager replacing Damian Wells who has secured a position with the North Central Catchment Management Authority. Sandy is no stranger to the area as she was involved in the Tragowel Plains Salinity Management Scheme and has been working out of the Pyramid Hill office as the Reconfiguration Coordinator for quite some time.



- 2 Bill Streader has been promoted to Reconfiguration Field Coordinator within the future management team and Paul Lacy who was our Customer Services Coordinator has left Pyramid-Boort Area and joined the reconfiguration team at Torrumbarry.
- 2 Other new faces to the area are field staff Doug Couper & Ashley Meehan, Administration Assistant Yvonne Leach & Russell Talbot who is working in maintenance.

Pyramid-Boort Farmers win G-MW National Water Week Award

The Pyramid-Boort Irrigation Area submitted four entrants into the National Water Week Excellence in on-farm efficiency awards. We are proud to announce that the winner of the award is local organic apple growers – Brian Smith and Sue Bennet of Synergy Farms, Yarrowalla. Their persistence in finding the right solutions for their farm has taken them on a 30 year journey using many innovative techniques.



The other nominations from our area included:
 ??Hazeldene's farm, Prairie who have installed solar powered pipes and risers to water their lucerne replacing the previous flood irrigation method,
 ??Eicher's farm, Salute Oliva at Boort with drip irrigation and streamlined operations onto the olives replacing the previous flood irrigated cattle paddocks and
 ??Robert and Glen Pickles with their wireless automated watering system onto crop bays to support their dairy stock.
 Congratulations to all the entrants for their enthusiasm with this award and their improved farming practices.

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Office – business hours **03 5455 7100**
 Waterline – all hours **03 5455 7411**
 Urgent Customer Service Difficulties & Faults – after hours **0428 351 296**
 Emergency – all hours **1800 064 184**

Federal Government Drought Assistance Funding

The Federal Government is providing grants of up to \$20,000 to assist eligible farm businesses in need. The Murray-Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grant is for on farm works, to improve efficiency.

The grant may assist with purchasing tanks, troughs, pipes and other equipment to improve your farming enterprise, particularly your domestic and stock supply. G-MW is encouraging all customers to consider the grants. For more information and application

forms go to <http://www.centrelink.gov.au/> and search for "grants".

Other grant information is available from both G-MW and DPI websites.

G-MW Responds to FoodBowl Steering Committee Report

At the time of writing this newsletter, we are eagerly awaiting the release of the FoodBowl Steering Group's Final Report that will outline the Committee's recommendations to improve the efficiency of the irrigation network right across the Goulburn Murray region and with the \$1 billion investment.

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

- ?G-MW's experience in managing the existing irrigation infrastructure in the GMID;
- ?G-MW's experience in undertaking a range of reconfiguration and modernisation projects albeit on a smaller scale to that possible under the Food Bowl Modernisation Project, 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 managed, 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 – particularly with regard to the operation and management of the overall irrigation supply network, as well as the public-private interface, ownership and management.
3. Existing Government regulatory agencies and legislation including other state and Federal water reform agendas need to be appropriately 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 we support the Steering Committee's comments that the SUE will be a lean, focused and agile decision making board that leverages the skills and resources already available in the region.

Once the Final Report is released we will review our existing capital works, modernisation and reconfiguration 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.

Domestic & 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.

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 behavior 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.

Channel Leaks

G-MW is experiencing a high number of channel leaks caused by cracks opening up in earthen channel banks due to the long dry period. These leaks if not repaired quickly can cause significant water loss and G-MW is asking all customers to be on the look out for any signs of channel leaks and to report them to their local G-MW office.

If customers detect a leak outside normal business hours, they can be reported to G-MW on its 24 hour phone line 1800 064 184.

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)

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 5455 7111.

Waterline Ordering on the WEB

Customers can now order water via the internet with Waterline online. Most of the phone features are available online and you can print your own Water Usage Statement. WaterLine Online is available at www.g-mwater.com.au and then follow the links to your area.

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.

The Murray system has a seasonal allocation of 23% of high reliability water shares.

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.



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Pyramid-Boort Operations
24 Barber Street, PO Box 4, Pyramid Hill, Victoria 3575

Phone: (03) 5455 7100
Fax: (03) 5455 7102
www.g-mwater.com.au

Coordination of Deliveries for Domestic & Stock Use

The coordination of water deliveries for domestic and stock use will continue in line with the resolution passed by the Pyramid-Boort WSC at the July meeting. In addition, if this approach repeats the success of 2006/07 it will be implemented as an ongoing policy for seasons where allocations are below 30%.

This season, the coordination of domestic and stock deliveries will be divided into 3 areas, and the boundaries are listed below.

Zone 1 PBIa west of the Loddon River

Zone 2 is bordered to the:

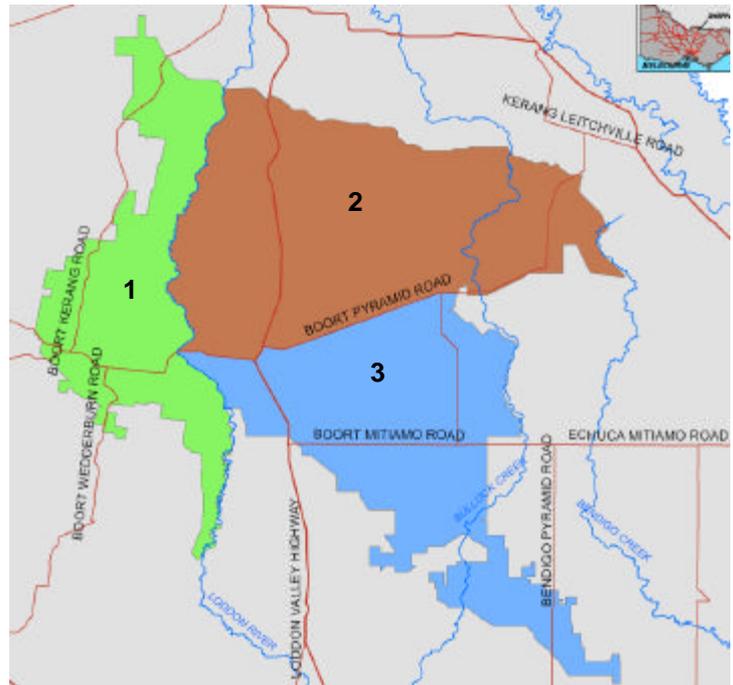
- North** by the Macorna channel,
- East** by the PBIa boundary,
- South** by the Durham Ox Road and Pyramid-Sylvaterre Road East
- West** by the Loddon river

Zone 3 PBIa East of the Loddon and South of the Durham Ox Road and Pyramid-Sylvaterre Road East

The coordination approach aims to fulfil customer domestic and stock water requirements while minimising losses through bulk delivery. Customers are requested to comply with these order dates in the interest of water savings. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and benefits all water-users across our region.

Please place your orders as usual through your area Planner by 5pm on the set dates and the water will be delivered in the following week.

Please refer to the enclosed laminated map



DATES FOR ZONES 1 ■ AND 3 ■

Order date (by 5pm)	Delivery in the week starting
Friday, 30 November 2007	Monday, 10 December 2007
Friday, 18 January 2008	Monday, 28 January 2008
Friday, 7 March 2008	Monday, 17 March 2008
Friday, 2 May 2008	Monday, 12 May 2008

DATES FOR ZONE 2 ■

Order date (by 5pm)	Delivery in the week starting
Friday, 7 December 2007	Monday, 17 December 2007
Friday, 25 January 2008	Monday, 4 February 2008
Friday, 14 March 2008	Monday, 24 March 2008
Friday, 2 May 2008	Monday, 12 May 2008

G-MW zero tolerance on illegal diversions and water theft

In the last few weeks there has been a worrying increase in reports of water theft. G-MW continues to take a tough line on water theft to protect our water resources for the benefit of all customers.

Water theft ultimately leads to increased prices and disrupted water delivery, and means there is less water available for allocation to customers. Water theft is also viewed very seriously by the courts and tough penalties apply.

Staff will be monitoring sections regularly, with night patrols continuing this season.

If you suspect or hear of water theft occurring please report your concerns to the G-MW Compliance group on **1800 064 184**. All calls will be treated with complete confidentiality and reports can be made anonymously.

The vast majority of customers do the right thing, but there is a small number who choose to do the wrong thing by their fellow water users. These people should remember that they are not taking water from G-MW but from other customers, and the laws are in place to make sure everyone gets a fair go.