



Shepparton Water Talk

November 2007

Message from the WSC Chair

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Channel Leaks

GMW 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 GMW 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.

As we continue through another year of drought I am constantly reminded of the financial and emotional impact on all irrigators and our local community.

The State Government has announced a drought relief package as detailed in this newsletter. There is also a range of other State and Federal initiatives available to irrigators and I encourage you to seek assistance during this extremely trying period. Most importantly visit Centrelink for assessment do not self assess.

The drought has reinforced the need to improve the efficiency of water delivery and its on farm use. We recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the completion of the East Goulburn Main. It provides a timely reminder of the age of much of our infrastructure and the need for projects like the Shepparton Modernisation Project.

The Shepparton modernisation Project is separate from the Foodbowl proposal and the proposed works are substantially detailed in the business case for the project. But like the Foodbowl will receive a third of the achieved water savings.

Irrigators will shortly be asked to be part of 'Pod meetings' to refine and optimise the outcome of the project. More information will be provided in future newsletters.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, the Foodbowl Steering Committee will have released its final report. The WSC put considerable time and effort into developing our submission to the Steering Committee to reflect the interests of local irrigators.

This newsletter also provides an update on unbundling and water trading. Goulburn System irrigators need to be aware that Stock and domestic entitlements no longer exist. **The entire entitlement now held by customers is subject to the announced allocation.** This is explained later but, in short, means the previous stock and domestic (D&S) allowance is now a High Reliability Water Share, and is subject to an allocation.

As Christmas approaches I wish everyone the very best for the year ahead. I hope you all have a happy and safe Christmas with loved ones and that the coming winter brings lots of rain.

John Horder
Chair Shepparton Water Services Committee



WSC Chair John Horder

Shepparton Water Services Committee 2007/08

Chairman John Horder	5829 9454	Deputy John Wenske	5828 3243	Ian Klein	5828 8350
Craig Reynolds	5828 8202	Alan Strang	5829 8481	Jamie Craig	5826 9468
Rien Silverstein	5829 2307	Max Hyland	5829 2271		

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

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 exceptional high water prices. These factors have significantly increased the number and urgency for many customers in confirming their water trades.

G-MW is currently processing most applications to transfer water within 4 days, with trades within the G-MW region confirmed within 10 days. Obviously there are individual applications that are more complex and have required longer processing times, especially application involving trades and transfers 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 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.

Reporting Water Theft

In the last few weeks there has been a worrying increase in reports of water theft. This season G-MW will continue 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.

Customers and members of the public are encouraged to report any suspicious activity by calling the G-MW emergency number (1800 064 184) at any time.

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. Water theft is not taking water from G-MW but from other customers, and the laws are in place to make sure everyone gets a fair go.

G-MW 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 running at around 60 percent of normal area 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 Stock and Domestic 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 as a part of the State Government's drought response measures and customers seeking to cart water should consider this source as well.

Domestic and Stock Entitlements now subject to allocations

Before 1 July 2007, domestic and stock entitlements in the Goulburn system were not affected by allocation and the full volume was available for use. With the conversion of domestic and stock entitlements to water shares through unbundling, all customer products 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 3.5 ML 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 former domestic and stock entitlement on the basis of the seasonal allocation.

Staff Safety is Our Priority

GMW 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.

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

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 bought to cover the additional water use. Syndicates without metered use should also restrict watering, or buy allocation to cover lawn watering in the deemed use.

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

GOULBURN SYSTEM

Water Resources Position

The Goulburn storages have reported well-below average rainfall in recent months. Only 18.8mm of rain was recorded at Lake Eildon and 5.8mm 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 40.8mm at Lake Eildon and 29.4mm 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.

	Lake Eildon	Waranga	Greens Lake
This Year	829.6 GL	138.1 GL	13.1 GL
Last Year	528.7 GL	155.9 GL	9.2 GL

Seasonal Allocation and Outlook

The Goulburn system 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 traditional 15 May date in 2008 after being initially shortened to boost early season allocations.

Goulburn-Murray Water

Mission Statement

To deliver sustainable water services that meet customer and stakeholder needs and support regional economic growth, whilst balancing social, economic and environmental considerations.

G-MW Web Site

www.g-mwater.com.au

Goulburn-Murray Water
21 Wheeler St
Shepparton Vic 3630

Office: 03 5832 9900

WaterLINE: 03 5832 9999

Service Difficulties

& Faults: 03 5832 9977

24 Hour Emergency: 1800 064 184

*Allocation for the
Goulburn System is
35%*

2007/2008 Fees and Charges

Charges	Unit	Price (Nominal \$)	
		2006/07	2007/08
Shepparton Gravity Irrigation			
Service Fee	Property	102.98	105.50
Additional Service Point Fee	Service Point	51.49	52.75
Delivery Infrastructure Access Fee	ML/day	3,152.31	3,232.46
Casual Infrastructure Fee	ML	39.81	56.78
Infrastructure Use Fee	ML	8.29	8.29
Termination Fee	ML/day	NA	48,486.90
Overuse Fee	ML	2,000.00	2,000.00
Community Surface Drainage Fee	KM	463.42	474.73
Shepparton Primary Surface Drainage			
Surface Fee	Property	102.98	105.50
Area Fee	HA	6.70	6.87
Water Use Fee	ML	4.70	4.81
Drainage Diversion Agreement Fee	ML	11.43	11.53
Subsurface Drainage Fee	ML	0.40	0.28

Jacking Pumps

Irrigators with direct suction pumps are reminded that it is prohibited to irrigate through a 'jacking' pump. This will be viewed by G-MW as 'taking water without authority' and offenders will face prosecution.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact your Planner through WaterLINE on 03 5832 9999.



Example of a jacking pump

Star Picket Covers

Star pickets have been used extensively to anchor Small Pipe Outlets in channels and channel banks. Rusty and broken pickets in the channel system become a potential hazard and risk to customer and staff safety. G-MW request customers with Small Pipe Outlets to cover all star pickets in the channel with either PVC or polyethelene pipe so it is visible above the water line. Further information may be obtained from the Shepparton Operations Office on 58329900.



Star picket with polyethelene cover

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 Shepparton area.