



# TORRUMBARRY Customer Newsletter

November 2007

## Message from the WSC Chairman

**H**aving been re-elected as Chairperson of the Torrumbarry WSC and supported by Margot Henty as the Deputy, we are committed to focus on several key issues.

These include low allocations, reliability of irrigation services, funding opportunities and long term viability. This will be achieved through direct interaction with Senior G-MW Executives, political processes and the Torrumbarry Reconfiguration and Asset Modernisation Strategy. The Torrumbarry Area has undertaken over twenty public meetings in the past year and will continue with an effective communication strategy to ensure customers and other stakeholders have the opportunity to be informed and provide feedback. We appreciate the high level of customer cooperation in responding to the pressures of managing water delivery in the current circumstances.

The current seasonal conditions are extreme and the WSC is providing advice to G-MW to assist in strategies to better manage issues such as domestic and stock use. The Area has six vacant staff positions, less than

50% on operational activities and 20% are redeployed.

The Foodbowl Modernisation Steering Committee has released its draft report and in addition to three public meetings, the WSC has put in a submission to the Steering Committee. The WSC see a great opportunity to access funds that will allow unprecedented upgrade of our system. Major change will occur in the next five years.

The Pental Island water savings project is an example of the creativity required to manage the transition of the water industry in the coming year. The extreme drought and low water allocations will hasten the change process. This will be difficult to manage but at the same time provide opportunities for individuals to achieve system and on-farm changes, or in extreme cases, to exit the irrigation industry.

**Geoff Williams**  
CHAIRPERSON  
TORRUMBARRY AREA  
Water Services Committee



## Festive Season and New Year

**M**anagement and staff at G-MW take this opportunity to wish all customers a happy and safe Christmas, and all the best in 2008 with significantly higher rainfall! The cooperation staff have found in dealing with difficult decisions to manage water losses and supply of small irrigation volumes and D&S has been outstanding, and will allow additional water to be allocated as the season progresses.

We thank you for your assistance and flexibility with orders to minimise the losses to achieve the best outcomes under exceptional circumstances.

### Christmas Office Hours

Kerang Office Closed  
December 24th-28th

Closed January 1st  
All water orders will need to go through WaterLINE.



## Water Accounts

**D**ue to the new system customers will need to ensure new reference numbers are correct if using BPay. Accounts can be paid at Australia Post where a receipt can be obtained. Please note: Area Offices are unable to process customer accounts and therefore delays in forwarding may occur.

### New WSC member

**T**he Torrumbarry Water Services Committee welcomes Ross Gordon who will represent the Cohuna area as a replacement for Karen Rowlands.



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## 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 to 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 applications 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 your 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](http://www.g-mwater.com.au))

## 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 SOE (State Owned Enterprise) 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 FoodBowl 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

### WSC Appointment

The Torrumbarry WSC is moving to have two appointed members and will be seeking expressions of interest in the foreseeable future through newspaper advertisements. The WSC will remain at nine members with the other seven elected by postal ballot. This provides an opportunity to fill any gaps in the expertise and representation of elected members.

## MURRAY SYSTEM

### Water Resources Position

**R**eleases were temporarily reduced and Dartmouth Reservoir and Hume Reservoir volumes improved slightly after rainfall during late October and early November. Dartmouth Reservoir recorded 44.8 mm during October and had received 46.4 mm to 14 November. The total October rainfall at Hume Reservoir was 29.4 mm, with 51.2 mm had been reported to 14 November.

Despite the rain, the inflows to the two storages remain well below average.

On 14 November 2007, the volume in Dartmouth Reservoir was 716.2 GL (18.3% of capacity) and Hume Reservoir held 805.9 GL (26.5% of capacity). At the same time last year, Dartmouth Reservoir and Hume Reservoir held 1,662.9 GL (42.6%) and 295.0 GL (9.7%) of capacity.

### Seasonal Allocation and Outlook

**T**he 15 November 2007 seasonal allocation in the Murray system is 23% of high-reliability water shares. Goulburn-Murray Water has also extended the season in the Murray gravity irrigation systems to 15 May 2008. The improvement in seasonal allocation and season length was provided by better than forecast inflows since the last announcement and the assignment of Goulburn-Murray Water efficiency savings to allocation.

With allocations above 20%, the qualification of rights in the Murray system has expired. All water use by customers, regardless of purpose, must now be in accordance with the allocated volume.

Using September to October inflows as a guide to future summer flows, the most optimistic seasonal allocation in the Murray system on 15 February 2007 is 31% of high-reliability water shares.

### Residential Water Use

**C**ustomers (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.

### Changed Address???

Please notify Goulburn-Murray Water and we will send out a form to fill in your current details. Phone Katrina at Kerang Office: 54510111

### Need to know how much water allocation you have remaining to use or sell?

[www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au) - Click on WaterLINE logo  
Select Torrumbarry - Log on with User and PIN  
Check Entitlement

Or phone WaterLINE **1300364752**  
Enter User and PIN Enter 5# then 5#

New WaterLINE booklets will be available soon. Should you require information on the updated options please call the office or email [jennyp@g-mwater.com.au](mailto:jennyp@g-mwater.com.au) and we will forward the information. *Thank you*





## 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. This 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.

## 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.

## TRAMS Progress

Stage one report is complete and currently a summary document is being prepared. The full report of over 100 pages can be made available as required, and shows that the Torrumbarry Area does not have a future if deliberate action is not taken.



The summary will be available from the Kerang office or by phoning 5451 0111, or the full report can be accessed on G-MW's website.

Andrea Joyce, has completed her secondment from DSE and ceased work as TRAMS Project Coordinator in September. Paul Lacy is the new Project Coordinator, formerly Water Distribution Officer at Cohuna and more recently as Customer Coordinator at G-MW Pyramid-Boort.

## 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 1300 364 752.**

### 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.

G-MW operational response to low supply

G-MW is also 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.