

GOULBURN-MURRAY
WATER

Murray Valley

IRRIGATION AREA

Chair Message

Once again we approach a season with no water allocation at the start of the traditional season. The way we have all adapted to operating our farms using much less water has been amazing, but I still dream of a year when our opening allocation is large, with every prospect of increasing to the maximum. It will come again, we just don't know when.

Your Water Services Committee (WSC) has been influential in seeing zero price increases for the 2009-10 irrigation season. The WSC have kept close scrutiny on expenditure in the irrigation area over the past 12 months and the co-operation of G-MW staff in reducing operating costs because of low allocations must also be applauded. It is this reduction in expenditure that has assisted in nett zero price increases for 2009/10.

Murray Valley is proceeding slowly with modernisation. In making this progress we want to take every opportunity to reduce the number of assets required whilst maintaining supply to every customer that wants it. Make sure you take the time to think about the possibilities on your farm to reduce the G-MW assets (channels, bridges, outlets etc) required. The price of water is largely driven by the maintenance and replacement cost of G-MW's assets. The greater the reduction in assets, the more opportunity there is to rein in price levels. I encourage you to keep an open mind when it comes to discussions about connecting to the backbone as there may be possibilities you had not even thought of that will be very good.



Let's hope the remainder of spring is wet, and our dams see a good deal of recovery before summer.

Heather du Vallon - Chair
Murray Valley WSC

New WSC Members Profile – Barry Croke

Barry Croke comes on to the Murray Valley Water Services Committee with a long history of involvement in irrigated agriculture representative bodies. During a career in education, Barry and his wife Margaret purchased a small farm at Naring. Deciding that farming should be their full time job, the Croke's purchased a nearby property in 1989. Initially in dairying, they have been forced to change to an irrigated cropping regime by continued low water allocations.

Barry is currently a member of the Murray Valley Modernisation Committee and brings a wealth of experience in representative organizations to the Water Services Committee.



Murray Valley Irrigation Area

Irrigation News

Carryover changes and delivery

The use of carryover as a method to help manage security during times of low allocation has been well accepted by G-MW customers since its introduction in 2007/08. The maximum volume that can be carried over from one year to the next has increased from 30% to 50% of High and Low Reliability Water Shares. The Northern Sustainable Water Strategy has proposed that this limit be increased to the equivalent of 100% of HRWS and 100% of LRWS in a concept called a spillable water account.

Along with proposed changes to allocation policies these key concepts should be understood by all irrigators and interested community members. Information is available on the website www.ourwater.vic.gov.au.

Delivery of carryover is dependant on the delivery system operating. Refer to Operations Plans on G-MW's website for more details.

Operations Plans

With low water allocations again likely for the 2009/10 season G-MW will continue to provide Operation Plans for each of its Irrigation Areas and regulated systems to provide customers information on how these systems will be operated.

These plans will be updated following each allocation announcement which occur on the 1st and 15th of each month (or the next business day). The Operation Plans specify how customers can access water for essential household needs, domestic and stock, and where delivery of any water in Allocation Bank Accounts might be possible, including allocation carried over from 2008/09.

Operation Plans are especially important when the seasonal allocation is less than 1% of HRWS as any operation of the system must be within the water available for system operating requirements. Operating Plans are available on the G-MW website

www.g-mwater.com.au

Customer Survey

G-MW seeks the views of customers on the quality of the service it provides and importantly how it can further improve these services in an annual survey.

The survey is undertaken with 20% of its customers representing channel irrigation, river diversion and groundwater users across an area of 68,000 square kilometers, roughly the size of Tasmania.

The information gathered in the survey is extremely valuable for G-MW to gauge its performance and identify areas for change or improvements.

Results from the survey, expected to be complete before September 2009, will be used to guide G-MW business operations and services to its 32,000 customers.

Web Use Increase

The end of the 2008/09 irrigation season marked a 50% increase in ordering over the internet by irrigation customers. As customers become aware of the new features available and how easy it is to use, G-MW anticipates the use of internet ordering will continue to increase.

On average, 350 orders were processed each and every day of the 2008/09 irrigation season, with one third of those orders placed through the internet.

Placing orders via G-MW's traditional WaterLINE phone service continues to be available and used by many customers, but we are seeing a larger proportion of our customers take up internet as their preferred method of ordering water.



G-MW Case Studies

Modernisation of northern Victoria's irrigation network is already delivering dividends for farmers and other water users across Northern Victoria according to five case studies released by the region's system manager Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW).

At this early stage of the 5-10 year modernisation program G-MW wanted to provide the broader community with some tangible examples of how channel automation, channel lining and new meters are improving the operation of the system, improving water efficiency and also enhancing our services to our customers. Losses like spills, seepage, leakage and meter error all delay allocations and also reduce the amount of water that is available for allocation and delivery to farmers, local communities and the environment.

All case studies are available from the G-MW website www.g-mwater.com.au/modernisationcasestudies

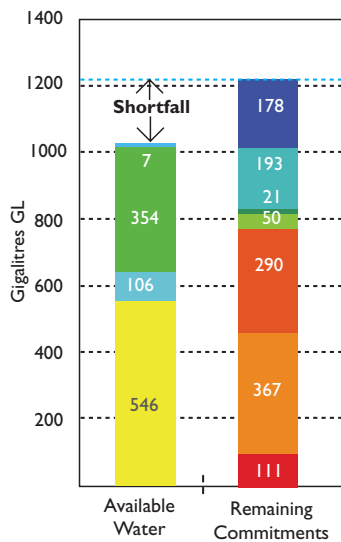
Murray Valley Irrigation Area

Irrigation News

Water Allocations – Information On Resource Position

G-MW released the first information on 2009 allocations and resources on the 1st of July 2009 and will provide updates on the 1st & 15th of each month or next business day. At 1 July 2009 there was insufficient resources to enable allocations on any of G-MW's six regulated systems including the Murray, Goulburn, Broken, Campaspe, Bullarook and Loddon Systems.

To provide customers access to detailed information on the resource position, in particular what is the shortfall before allocations are made, G-MW has established "Rocket Diagrams" indicating details of the volume of water available and commitments to be met prior to allocations being made. The two diagrams included below indicate the position on the Murray & Goulburn systems as at the 17 August 2009. Current information on all systems is available on G-MW's website www.g-mwater.com.au under the Customers Services/G-MW Drought Response tabs.



Starting point for allocations

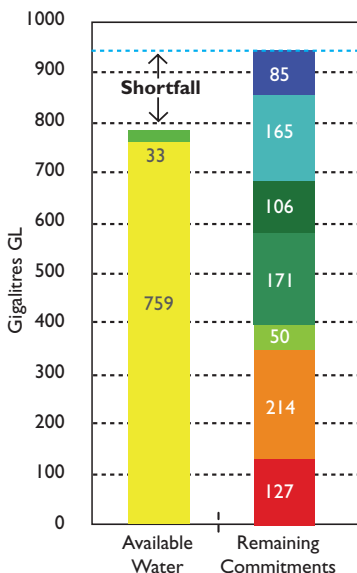
Remaining Commitments

- Remaining Allocated Volume (incl Carryover)
 - Channel Distribution Losses to 15 May 2010
 - Environmental
 - Essential Human Needs
 - Vic Share of SA Dilution Flow
 - Vic Share of River Losses upstream of SA
 - Vic Share of Evaporation
- #### Available Resources
- Vic Share of Water in Transit
 - Vic Share of Forecast Inflow to Murray System
 - Vic Share of Goulburn Valley Account
 - Vic Share of Total in Store

GL = 1,000 ML
Source: Goulburn-Murray Water

Breakdown of water in store and commitments
17 August 2009

Murray System



Starting point for allocations

Remaining Commitments

- Remaining Allocated Volume (incl Carryover)
 - Channel Distribution Losses to 15 May 2010
 - Trade Commitment to Murray system
 - Urban and Environmental
 - Essential Human Needs
 - Storage and River Losses
 - Volume below Minimum Operating Level
- #### Available Resources
- Forecast inflows (to Eildon and Goulburn Weir)
 - Total in Store

GL = 1,000 ML
Source: Goulburn-Murray Water

Breakdown of water in store and commitments
17 August 2009

Goulburn System

2009 Season Update

New WSC Member William Jones

Bill is the son of original soldier settlers in the Yarroweyah area. He and wife Julie are currently milking 450 cows on their farm and Bill says concerns about the future of irrigation in the area prompted him to seek a position on the Water Services Committee (WSC).

One of Bills strengths is his strong ties back into the community. He is a life member of both the Yarroweyah Football and Cricket Clubs, and is very well known by many members of his community. This will give him the opportunity to collect information from fellow irrigators to bring to the WSC, and also take information back into the irrigation community from the WSC.

The Great Bourke Retires

Long serving Water Bailiff Peter Bourke has hung up his dipstick and bar hook. "Bourkey" is a well known and respected member of the Waaia community, and plenty of irrigators and workmates were on hand to help celebrate a long and distinguished career at a function held in Numurkah during August.

Plenty of stories were told (some were even true!) about Peter and his time on the job with "the Rivers".

A presentation was made to Peter from those gathered and also from Goulburn-Murray Water to honour over 33 years of loyal service.



Compliance

The 2008/09 irrigation season saw compliance reporting increase by some 38% on the previous season. This increase in reporting of potential water related offences can be partially attributed to a vigilant community seeking to assist in the protection of what is a very scarce resource during this most difficult of droughts and also to an increased field based surveillance provided by G-MW.

Goulburn-Murray Water actively investigates all reports of alleged water theft and other breaches of the Water Act. Approximately 50% of last season's 343 reports are being progressed through the Courts.

This coming season will see an increase in proactive detection activities including more waterborne surveillance as well as increased use of new technologies including surveillance cameras and other remote detection means.

Suspected incidents of water act offences can be reported to G-MW 24 hours a day 7 days a week on phone 1800 064 184 and this can be done anonymously.

Costs of Modernisation “Whole of Life Project”

G-MW has now completed the “Whole of Life Project” which looked at the impacts that modernisation will have on our irrigation network and how this will shape the future price path for customers. The Whole of Life Project involved extensive modelling covering three primary scenarios.

1. A Base Case which looked at G-MW in its current form, including the Shepparton and Central Goulburn 1-4 Modernisation Projects, however assuming no further modernisation, ie without NVIRP.
2. An NVIRP Stage I Scenario, which modelled the system where the backbone is established, automation of the backbone and replacement of all detridge meter outlets on the backbone with magflow meters undertaken. This scenario also assumed the rationalisation of 28% of channels, not on the backbone and the movement of delivery share associated with these assets to the backbone.
3. This scenario assumed G-MW would only operate the backbone and that all “spur” channels are rationalised, with the associated delivery shares transferred to the backbone. These customers would either be “connected” through 1 to 1 connections or syndicates.

This work identified the key cost drivers in the modernised system. Assets such as magflow meters, automatic regulators, the software and hardware associated with running these assets have been identified as major cost items. The combination of these costs with the reduction in future liability for assets rationalised, and connections established were modelled to demonstrate the impact on future prices.

We will now be working through the results of this project with our Water Service Committees and NVIRP’s Modernisation Committees over the coming weeks.

Copies of G-MW’s Whole of Life cost review Executive Summary are available from www.g-mwater.com.au/wholeoflife. The full report will be available in the near future.

www.g-mwater.com.au

NVIRP Update

The 2009 winter works for Stage I of the \$2 billion irrigation upgrade is now complete with over 1000 more regulator gates installed during the current winter shut-down.

Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) CEO Murray Smith said, although we had a slow start to the works this winter because of rain, we have been able to install another 1000 gates in backbone channels throughout Torrumbarry, Murray Valley, Rochester, Pyramid-Boort and Central Goulburn Irrigation Areas.

“We are now two thirds through the replacement of these regulator gates and the replacement of on-farm outlets is continuing.

“NVIRP’s Modernisation Coordinators will continue to work with G-MW customers to make sure that that the connections program is assisting them to review their farm operation and to take advantage of the modernised backbone.

“This is a time of great change in the irrigation industry and we encourage all landowners to rethink what will make their enterprise more profitable in the future and discuss these options with our Modernisation Coordinators and Farm Irrigation Designers.

Modernisation Coordinators for all Irrigation Districts can be contacted by phoning NVIRP on 1300 163 006.

Drainage Tarriff Review

A review of the way G-MW recover the cost of providing drainage services has commenced. The tariff review will cover Surface Drainage, Community Surface Drainage and Drainage Diversion Services.

The process has been initiated following requests from Water Service Committees and individual customers for G-MW to review current Drainage Diversion tariff. Ongoing drought, modernisation and improved farming techniques have resulted in the water available in drains for diversion being dramatically reduced. In these changing times it is timely for a fresh look at the way costs are recovered for drainage services.

Stakeholder Reference Committees that include customers have been established to ensure customers have input into the future tariff options. A significant amount of preliminary work has already been done and several options developed for discussion. Some initial consultation with WSC’s has also occurred.

Prior to more formal and extensive consultation, financial modeling of the different options will be completed to provide information for a selection of practical options. Following consideration by the Reference Committee, options considered practical, will be progressed to formal customer consultation.

Board approval is required for any changes to the existing tariff. It is expected that the process will be completed in time for any proposed changes to be implemented in the 2010/11 year.

Customers wanting to have an input to the process will be able to attend one of the public information sessions which will be advertised once details are confirmed or can contact the local Area office for details of reference committee members.

WaterLINE Modernisation

G-MW has made improvements for customers ordering and managing their water through WaterLINE.

New Phone Number to order water – 1300 469 469

Customers can now contact WaterLINE using one common phone number – 1300 469 469, (i.e. 1300 GMW GMW), for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Australia.

More functions via WaterLINE Online

G-MW encourages all customers to use the internet for ordering and managing their water using WaterLINE - Online (i.e. via the internet). WaterLINE – Online is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and a direct link is found on G-MW's homepage, www.g-mwater.com.au. WaterLINE - Online now offers customers additional functions such as meter read entry, a facility enabling customers to more actively manage their water accounts and generate current statements, and the ability to leave messages for planners via the internet.

New User Number – additional 2 digits

For improved security and functions for customers, the User Number has been increased to 7 digits. 2 digits have been added to the start of customers old User Number. The 2 digits have been set based on the channel or river system your property is supplied from. Every G-MW customer will receive a letter detailing this information. If you have not received this letter please contact your local G-MW office. In response to customer feedback & to provide improved system monitoring, as systems are modernised, planners will be in the office, contactable and check messages for extended hours when water is being delivered during the irrigation season. Details are contained in the letters being sent to customers and on the G-MW website or via WaterLINE.

Free WaterLINE information sessions

Over the coming months there will be opportunities available to come along to free WaterLINE information sessions where you can have a demonstration of WaterLINE online. Details of these sessions will be communicated in the media. If you would prefer a G-MW staff member to visit and provide individual assistance please contact your local office. G-MW has posted to every customer a guide to help you access the services available from WaterLINE please take the time to familiarise yourself with this information and take advantage of the improved functions now available. Additional copies will be available from your local office.

Rural Support Line 1300 655 969

Lifeline 131 114

Beyondblue 1300 224 636

contacts

To place an order go to Waterline online via G-MW's website or phone Waterline on 1300 469 469

Internet

www.g-mwater.com.au

Hint Add the login page to your favourites

G-MW can be contacted during normal business hours at any of its offices.

Murray Valley Office:
03 5871 0100

Emergencies

Customers may contact G-MW to report emergencies and urgent matters such as reporting of pollution incidents and illegal activities by using the 24 hours emergency line.

24 hours emergency line:
1800 064 184

WSC MEMBERS

Max Baker	03 5864 1011
Barry Croke	03 5865 8231
Heather du Vallon (Chair)	03 5864 1161
Alan Hendy	03 5865 8250
Ben McCracken	03 5864 6591
Jim McKeown	03 5873 2276
Kevin Whatman	03 5865 1399
William Jones	03 5873 2257

Murray Valley WSC

Hosts G-MW Board Tour

The Murray Valley Water Services Committee (MV WSC) hosted a tour by G-MW Board members prior to their June Board meeting. During this tour the Committee was able to show the Board some of the amazing outcomes of Modernisation. There was also an opportunity to remind the Board that other problems such as arrowhead will not be cured by modernisation.

By showing the Board what is possible through modernisation and reminding them of the ongoing challenges facing irrigators and G-MW staff alike, the MV WSC really set the scene for the G-MW Board meeting where the major focus was on modernisation.