

irrigation news

GOULBURN-MURRAY
WATER

Pumped Districts

Nyah, Tresco and Woorinen

Chair's Message

The 2010/11 year is certainly far more promising than at the same time in the past few seasons with good inflows in all catchments as highlighted by recent flood events on the Murray, Loddon and Avoca rivers.

I would like to congratulate Margot Henty and Brian Boulton on their re-appointment to our Water Services Committee. I would also like to welcome Daniel Irwin back to the area as our new Operations Manager. Daniel will be a great asset to the area as we move into a period of change.

With much of the focus on the Modernisation program underway in the gravity irrigation areas, as a committee, we are conscious of ensuring that we consider and plan for the future operations in our pumped areas where our irrigators are also facing many challenges.

Brian Boulton (Pumped District Representative) is an integral part of ensuring the issues being faced by pumped district customers are raised and discussed with G-MW and other committee members.

The Water Services Committee is working with G-MW to determine a suitable time in the New Year to conduct an irrigators meeting in each of the pumped districts to discuss several changes in water policy, pricing and operations to ensure all customers have the opportunity to stay informed on issues impacting on their business. Further information regarding these information sessions will be provided in the near future.



Charlie Gillingham
Central Murray WSC, Chair



Brian Boulton
Central Murray WSC,
Pumped District Representative

2010/11 Pricing

Several irrigators have contacted G-MW in relation to their 2010/11 fixed accounts. These customers had identified a significant increase in the fixed fee account when compared to the same account in 2009/10. These concerns were presented to the Central Murray Water Services committee who requested additional information pertaining to the price increases. The following information shows a comparison of the Infrastructure Access Fee (per capacity share) over the past 5 years in each pumped district.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Nyah	\$2,953.21	\$3,087.35	\$3,313.84	\$2,561.65	\$3,243.03
Tresco	\$4,287.65	\$4,186.39	\$4,272.87	\$3,468.48	\$4,088.77
Woorinen	\$2,861.93	\$3,057.64	\$3,475.42	\$3,373.18	\$3,627.83

The fixed fees in 2009/10 were substantially reduced due to a change in expected delivery volumes in each of the pumped districts. In 2010/11 the fixed fees have returned to a level comparable to (or less than) 2008/09 which is a more accurate reflection of expected fixed revenue requirements.

Carryover and Reserve Policy

The 2010/11 irrigation season has enabled eligible customers to carryover unused allocation from the 2009/10 season under the new rules adopted through the Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy (NRSWS) document.

The new rules enable customers to carryover all unused allocation, in an ABA linked to Water Shares, from one season to the next. This was previously limited to a volume equivalent to 50% of your Water Shares.

Other key changes under the new carryover rules include;

- The introduction of a Spillable Water Account to reduce the risk of losing access to water
- Carryover is accounted for first against Low Reliability Water Shares and then against High Reliability Water Shares.
- Storage Declaration – G-MW (Water Resource Manager) is required to make a Declaration when there is little chance of the storage ‘spilling’. For customers on the Murray system consideration is given to the likelihood of Dartmouth dam (not Hume dam) ‘spilling’ (internal or physical spill) prior to the Declaration being made.

Customers who have carried over water into the 2010/11 irrigation season are reminded that G-MW have made the Declaration and therefore all carryover water plus 2010/11 allocations are available for use and/or trade.

The reserve policy is designed to provide customers with confidence that the irrigation system will have enough water to operate at the beginning of the following season. In effect a ‘reserve’ of water will be retained between an allocation of 30%-50% HRWS to enable system operating requirements to be met for the following year. This will be done on a 1 to 1 basis (i.e. for every two ML's captured in storage between an allocation of 30%-50% HRWS, 1 ML will be allocated to improving customer allocations and 1 ML will be ‘reserved’ for the system operating requirements). All water captured in storage after 50% HRWS has been reached will be allocated to customers.

Please note this does not take effect in the Murray system until 2011/12, however is currently operational on the Goulburn system in 2010/11.

Customers interested in learning more about the new carryover rules and reserve policy are encouraged to attend information sessions that will be conducted by G-MW in the New Year.

Blue Green Algae Alert

Customers in the Tresco Irrigation area are reminded to be mindful that High Levels of Blue-Green Algae have been detected in the Torrumbarry irrigation system which supplies water to Tresco. Water with detected High levels of BGA is not suitable for Domestic and Stock purposes and boiling the water will not eliminate the algae. Customers seeking additional information should contact the BGA Hotline on 5833 5785.

Customer Service Improvements

Goulburn-Murray Water recently completed a Customer Satisfaction phone survey for the 2009/10 irrigation season. It is pleasing to note that customers in the three pumped districts have a high level of service satisfaction with 90% of customers satisfied with their overall service from G-MW. Thank you to all those who took part in the survey and provided valuable feedback.

To ensure we continually improve our service to customers G-MW is currently investigating the possibility of providing 24/7 access to a Planner during the irrigation season. This will enable customers to speak directly with a Planner to make adjustments to orders or report pipeline leaks/blowouts at any time of day or night during the irrigation season. We are also investigating the possibility of notifying customers of pipeline maintenance issues (leaks/blowouts etc) via a SMS service on your mobile phone. This will enable customers to be informed of any maintenance issues quickly and effectively. Customers will be advised when these services become available.

Rural Support Line 1300 655 969
Lifeline 131 114
Beyondblue 1300 224 636

G-MW can be contacted during normal business hours at any of its offices. Customers may contact G-MW to report emergencies and urgent matters such as reporting of pollution incidents and illegal activities by using the after hours emergency line: **1800 064 184**

WSC MEMBERS

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