

Green snails detected

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has advised that the Green snail, which was previously restricted to Western Australia, has been detected in a Lucerne crop near Cobram, Victoria.

DPI's 2km 'Pest Quarantine Area' as well as a 25km 'Restricted Area' around the initial detection area are still in place.

Please monitor your crops for any changes that may occur.

For more information please visit the DPI website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au.

Water Safety

With the weather warming up, it is important to remember to be safe around the water. Both dams and rivers can have hidden debris below the surface while the current of a river can change quickly. Stay safe this summer, swim with care.

Regional WSC Workshop summary

On the 22 September 2011 G-MW held a Regional Water Service Committee Workshop to engage with customer representatives on the following issues:

- Water plan 3 framework and timeframes
- Price Drivers
- Diversion Tariff review
- Resource assessment
- Licence renewal framework
- Unbundling in unregulated and groundwater
- National Compliance Framework
- Murray Darling Basin plan update

Representatives participation in the workshop was robust and provided G-MW staff with valuable customer perspective; feedback with regard to the above issues was productive and highlighted that further engagement with customer representatives will be required and consultation processes developed moving forward.

Environmental Flows

Orders placed with G-MW for Environmental flows to be released from our storages can affect river heights which may impact on some diversion pump installations. Please adjust your pump arrangements accordingly. If you are unsure, please contact your local G-MW Area office or your local Diversion Inspector.

Domestic & Stock Dams

Please remember that you must apply to register all new dams and/or prior to undertaking alternations to existing dams on all properties within rural residential zones and any property less than 8ha.

All G-MW offices will remain open over the Christmas period except for public holidays.

Rural Support Line 1300 655 969

Lifeline 131 114

Beyondblue 1300 224 636

Emergencies

To report emergencies and urgent matters such as pollution incidents and illegal activities call our 24 hour emergency line.

24 hour emergency line:

1800 064 184

contacts

Murray North-East Operations

Cobram office

03 5871 0100

Wangaratta office

03 5723 2501

Goulburn Broken Operations

Shepparton office

03 5832 9900

Central Goulburn office

03 5833 5705

Loddon-Campaspe Operations

Pyramid Hill office

03 5455 7100

Rochester office

03 5484 0400

Central Murray Operations

Torrumbarry office

03 5451 0111

G-MW e-services



Online Payments:

To pay your G-MW account please visit our website at www.g-mwater.com.au



eDams:

Water storage levels emailed to you daily, weekly or monthly.



Groundwater & Diversions

Managers message

What a year it has been! With increased rainfall over the past 12 months, aquifers have been able to significantly recover, resulting in maximum allocations for all areas.

The release of the draft Murray-Darling Basin plan has certainly gained a lot of attention and we urge all customers to attend at least one public meeting to become better informed of the impacts this plan will have on you as water users and your community as a whole. For more information please contact the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Draft Basin Plan team on 1800 230 067 or engagement@mdba.gov.au.

Recently, the G-MW Water Wheel Van visited Daylesford and Kyneton with Diversion staff available to answer any questions customers may have had. The intent was to raise awareness within these communities of G-MW's roles and responsibilities. The visits were received well by both towns, with several enquiries made and followed up. Further visits are planned for 2012.

As the weather warms up it is a timely reminder that whilst dams and rivers appear inviting as a place to swim they are in reality very hazardous. They are not a safe place to swim as objects can be hidden below the surface.

There have been many changes to the water industry in the past, and there will be going forward as well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all customers for their determination and tolerance in managing through these circumstances as they emerge.

Your RWSC have been busy advising us of the many issues raised by customers throughout the year and at the Regional Water Service Committee Workshop. Pricing is one such issue, and they have been assisting senior staff to develop 'Water Plan 3' which will form a guide for future pricing. Thanks must go to the RWSC members for their dedication and capacity to confront all these reforms in a constructive manner.

Remember that if you are unsure or need clarification about anything related to groundwater or diversion issues then please contact your local G-MW area office.

On behalf of G-MW and RWSC members I would like to wish customers a Merry Christmas, a safe New Year.



Barry O'Donnell
Manager, Diversions and Compliance



Peter Serpell
Chair, Upper Murray,
Mitta & Kiewa RWSC



Malcolm Carson
Chair, Ovens, King &
Mid Murray RWSC



Morris Brown
Chair, Goulburn
Broken RWSC



Alan Rothacker
Chair, Loddon
Campaspe RWSC

newsletter

Groundwater Updates

Upper Ovens WSPA Water Management Plan

After much community consultation, the Draft Upper Ovens Local Management Plan was completed in August this year and has been submitted to the Victorian Minister for Water for approval. If this Plan is approved by the Minister it will be implemented from 1 July 2012.

Lower Ovens GMA Local Management Plan

Over the past year a detailed study has been undertaken into the hydrogeology and hydrology of the water resources within the Ovens Valley in North East Victoria. This study provides the foundation to develop the Lower Ovens Local Management Plan. A reference committee made up of the Rural City of Wangaratta, North East Catchment Management Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment, North East Water, TAFCO Rural Supplies, Alpine Shire Council and irrigators has been established to help in the development of the Plan and a draft will be released for public comment in early 2012.

Loddon Highlands WSPA

The Loddon Highlands WSPA consultative committee held a public meeting in August to deliver a summary of the technical understanding of the local aquifer system. The meeting was also an opportunity for the wider community to put forward their expectations of a new groundwater management plan.

Following the public meeting a survey was conducted to provide groundwater users with an opportunity to have input to the development of the groundwater management plan. The outcomes from the survey are being considered by the consultative committee as they develop management proposals.

A public meeting will be held in early 2012 to discuss the management proposals developed by the consultative committee.

Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA

The consultative committee established to develop the Groundwater Management Plan have reached agreement on rules to be included to manage groundwater resources.

The consultative committee held public meetings in Rochester and Goornong in October to present these management rules. The meetings allowed the community to discuss the plan with the committee and provide useful feedback.

The consultative committee are now in the process of drafting the groundwater management plan for public review and comment in early 2012.

Katunga WSPA Groundwater Management Plan 5 Year Review

As part of the Katunga WSPA Groundwater Management Plan a performance review is to be undertaken every five years. This year's review has concluded that overall the plan has worked well over the past five years; however G-MW has identified some areas for improvement to the way groundwater is managed in the area. The review, its findings and next steps have been submitted to DSE for consideration. If any changes are required to the plan as a result of the submission to DSE, the Minister for Water will appoint a committee to review the potential changes and make recommendations.

Shepparton Irrigation Region WSPA – A New Groundwater Management Framework

A National Water Commission funded project is currently underway to produce a new groundwater management framework for the Shepparton Irrigation Region. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year and it aims to develop a new, more flexible framework which will enable rules to be developed for managing the groundwater resource when groundwater levels are low and the resource is limited. The project also includes a social research component which will see a greater understanding of groundwater users behaviours and expectations incorporated into the new resource management framework.

Catchment update

G-MW Diversion staff has commenced the scheduled meter maintenance plans for each catchment and will continue to work through these over the coming months.

Goulburn Broken Catchment

The winter-fill and unregulated meter reads have been undertaken. If you have winter-fill conditions on your licence you can no longer divert water after October 31.

Service point numbers are currently being placed on pumps and groundwater bores for ease of identification for G-MW staff and customers alike.

Domestic & stock pipe outlets have been identified and entered into a program to allow annual deeming to account for water usage.

Ovens Catchment

Murray North East Operations Diversions staff has undertaken further training in installing and maintaining electronic meters, and as a result the focus for this year has been on working on this type of meter. The majority of flood damaged sites in the north east have now been visited and damage to assets assessed. With a number of customers yet to replace their flood damaged works it is anticipated work over the coming year will focus on replacing G-MW assets as these sites come back on line with the construction of new works.

Loddon-Campaspe Catchment

This year, maintenance work within the Loddon-Campaspe Catchment has been focused on replacing lost or damaged meters as a result of the floods. G-MW Diversions staff have been proactive in contacting river diverters and groundwater users to establish the extent of damaged assets. G-MW employees will continue to work with customers who have experienced damage, with the intent to coordinate works to minimise impacts on their businesses.

Managing Use within Entitlement

G-MW reminds all customers that all use must be managed within license entitlement or allocation. If temporary transfer of entitlement is available in your area, you must ensure a transfer is approved by G-MW before any use additional to your license entitlement volume occurs.

It is important for Groundwater customers not to assume use in excess of your licensed entitlement can be included as a Domestic and Stock allowance. Customers should contact their local Diversion Inspector who will provide advice as to the calculation of a reasonable domestic and stock allowance. Customers who use in excess of their entitlement face the risk of prosecution for breaching licence conditions or possible cancellation of their licence.

Rostered Restrictions and Local Management Rules

Goulburn-Murray Water monitors stream flows to assess water availability for all users including the environment. Water use restrictions are implemented when stream flows fall below levels that can not support user demand and a healthy environment.

G-MW will give customers as much notice as possible that restrictions will apply or change. Individuals stream flows can change rapidly so it is not always possible to provide a lot of advanced notice. All customers (except Domestic and Stock customers) will receive written notice and a copy of the roster by mail. You are advised that allocated times must be adhered to.

G-MW are currently finalising the Local Management Rules (LMR's) Project. LMR's are a tool to document management arrangements for unregulated surface water, restriction triggers, passing environmental flow arrangements and trading zones. LMR's describe the specific objectives for managing flows in a defined catchment and documented rules that will be applied by G-MW to achieve objectives.

G-MW actively manages 93 separate unregulated catchments across our region. To find out more about your local management rules visit our website at www.g-mwater.com.au

Water Plan 3 update

G-MW has begun planning for its next Water Plan which will be released next year.

Water Plan 3 will set the direction for G-MW pricing for the three years commencing 2013/14 by working with our customers, Regional Water Services Committees and key stakeholders to develop our pricing structure and the service standards expected by our customers.

Consultation with Regional Water Service Committee members has already commenced and customers will be asked to participate in the new year through a range of feedback opportunities including surveys and forums.