

Goulburn Valley Water NEWS

Keeping you informed

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CEO's Column

Welcome to this edition of Goulburn Valley Water News. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their understanding and co-operation throughout the difficult summer period. All towns within our region are on water restrictions. Our customers in Mansfield, Merrijig, Sawmill Settlement, Woods Point, Euroa, Violet Town, Broadford, Clonbinane, Kilmore, Wandong-Heathcote Junction and Longwood are on the most stringent water restrictions and are only permitted to use water inside the house. If there is not significant autumn rainfall then other towns within the region will also be placed on higher restrictions.

In February two new board members took their place at the GVW Board table. The Minister for Water, Environment & Climate Change appointed Don Cummins and Mark Lawlor to the Board and has reappointed Mike Hall, Cathie Scott and Margaret Rae.

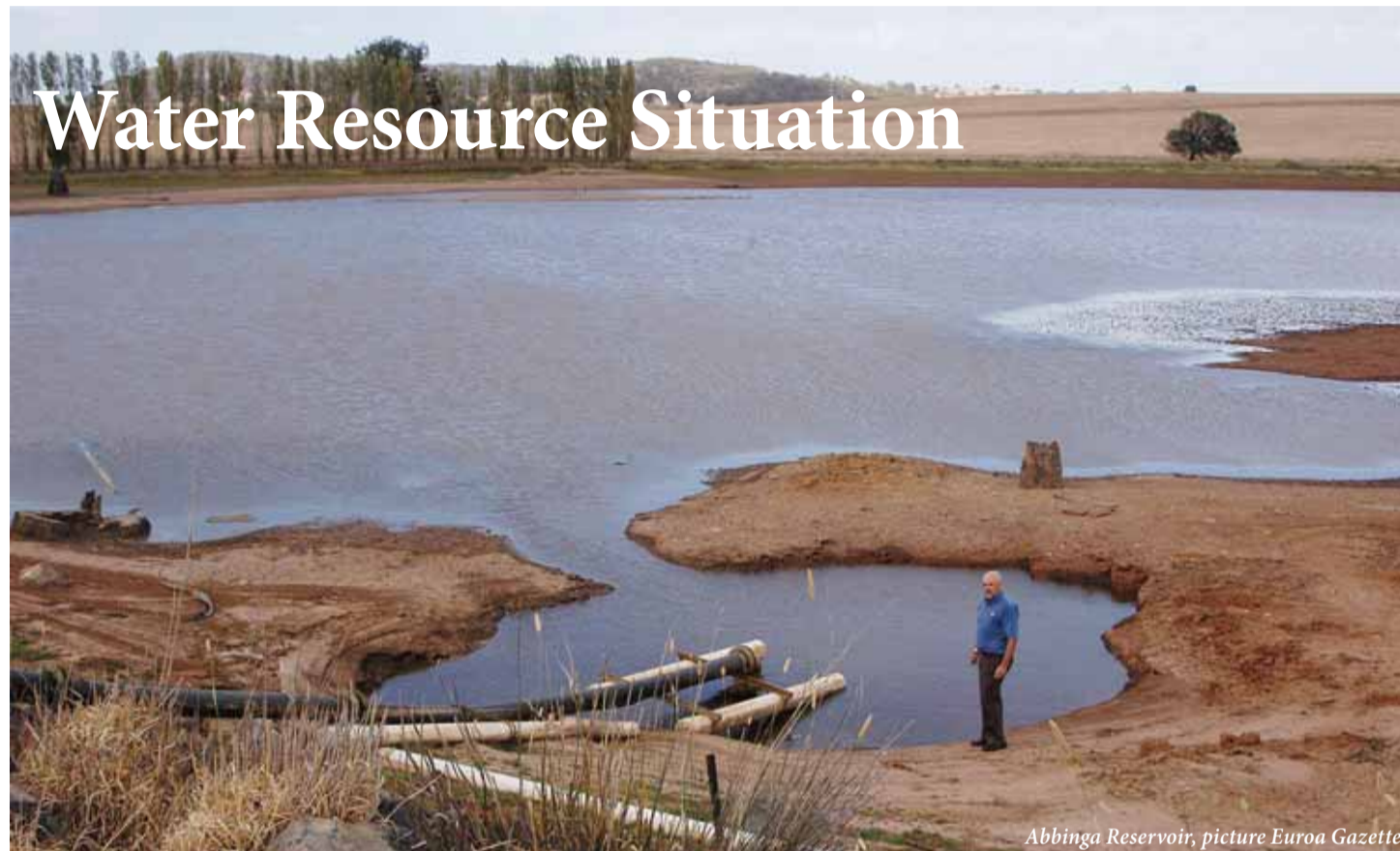
Mark Lawlor was previously on the Board in the 1990s. Mark lives in Merrigum and is the Managing Director of a successful fencing company; he has also served on the Goulburn-Murray Water Board.

Many people will know Don Cummins for his role as Chairman of Goulburn-Murray Water and he is also a member of the Board of the Goulburn Broken CMA. He is a member of the Murray Darling Basin Commission Community Advisory Committee and has previously served on Delatite and Mansfield Shire Councils.

The reappointment of Cathie Scott, Mike Hall, and Margaret Rae provides continuity, a wide knowledge base and experience. The two other members of the GVW Board are Denis Flett and the Chair of the Board Jenny Houghton. To find out more about our Board members visit our website www.gvwater.vic.gov.au/corporate/management/board.asp.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Goulburn Valley News. If you would like additional information on a particular article or wish to provide feedback, please contact Mary Connelly-Gale on (03) 5832 0471 or email maryc@gvwater.vic.gov.au ❖

Laurie J Gleeson
Chief Executive Officer



Abbinga Reservoir, picture Euroa Gazette

Water Resource Situation

We supply water to 54 towns, from Cobram in the north to Wandong in the south. The security of supply and the ability to access water for each town can be quite different, which is why a number of towns are on different levels of water restrictions.

The towns are grouped into four categories, the Goulburn System, the Murray System, the G-MW Channel System and Unregulated Streams.

The Goulburn System

We have a very secure entitlement on the Goulburn System which is determined by calculating inflows to Lake Eildon over a two year period. After the extremely low inflows in 2006, our entitlement was still around 95% for 2006/07 and we will carryover some of that water to next year. However, with the low 2006 inflows now enshrined in the two year calculations we are at risk of a significant reduction to our allocation for the 2007/08 season. This is likely to require the introduction of higher levels of water restrictions over the coming months.

The Murray System

The Murray system has a lower level of security than the Goulburn System. Come 1 July this year we may face the prospect of a very low initial seasonal allocation. Unless significant rainfall and inflows occur over the next couple of months, this will almost certainly mean that we will progressively introduce higher levels



Sunday Creek Reservoir

of water restrictions from around the beginning of May.

The G-MW Channel System

Our water source for the following towns is from the G-MW channel system: Colbinabbin, Corop, Dookie, Girgarre, Katamatite, Katandra West, Kyabram, Merrigum, Picola, Stanhope, Tatura and Tongala. Because the irrigation season is scheduled to close at the end of April and the difficulty in running the channel system in winter to supply urban communities, it is likely that higher levels of water restrictions will be required in these towns from the close of the irrigation season.

Unregulated Streams

This category refers to towns where we source water from streams without a major

dam upstream. This means that we can only divert water from the stream when there is sufficient passing flow. During 2006/07 a number of streams have had record low flows and therefore pumping has stopped and we needed to introduce significant restrictions.

Long-Term

At the moment we are finalising our 50 year Water Supply Demand Strategy, GVW2055 – A Sustainable Urban Water Future. The main objective of GVW2055 is to ensure that we have a balance between demand for water and available water resources over the next 50 years. GVW2055 is a living document that will be reviewed every five years and will form part of the Northern Region Water Supply Strategy for Victoria. ❖



Working With Industry To Save Water

Over the past five years we have been working with our major customers to reduce water consumption. You may recall back in 2002 SPC won the Save Water Award for their water reduction and cleaner production. We have also introduced a regular forum for our major customers and the first two forums included a workshop on water conservation.

There has been a lot of talk in recent months about large companies being allowed to use as much water as they like during water restrictions. However, very little is heard about those companies doing great things to save water. Over the coming issues we will highlight industries we are working with to reduce water and trade waste. In this issue we would like to recognise and congratulate HW Greenham & Sons in Tongala for their world's best practice approach to water conservation.

A water use study was recently conducted at HW Greenham & Sons abattoir in Tongala. The study found that Greenhams is close to world's best practice for total water consumption per tonne of meat processed.

Peter Greenham, Executive Chairman of HW Greenham & Sons, said that he was delighted with the study's findings.

"We have always tried to be a responsible member of the local business community and are very proud to be identified as an environmental leader within the Goulburn Valley industries" said Mr Greenham.

In commenting on his company's approach to the environment Mr Greenham said "HW Greenham & Sons has deliberately worked in close co-operation with Goulburn Valley Water on all environmental matters, believing that a co-operative approach produces the best result for both parties."

The study conducted at Greenhams was part of an ongoing cleaner production program run by Goulburn Valley Water and EPA. The aim of the cleaner production program is to help large industries reduce water consumption, trade waste discharge and the amount of salt in the wastewater.

Reducing the amount of salt in the wastewater has numerous benefits for the company, the Authority and the environment. Benefits include cost savings for the company on products and trade waste discharge fees, less impact on wastewater infrastructure and a higher quality recycled water is produced resulting in an environmentally sustainable product that can be used for irrigation.

The study has also helped Greenhams identify additional ways of reducing their water consumption and wastewater flows.

Saving water in the home

Water is the most precious resource we have, yet we often take it for granted.

Saving water in our homes isn't hard, there are lots of simple things that we can do to make a real difference. Changing the way in which we use water around our homes is just as important as fixing leaking taps and buying water efficient appliances.

In the Laundry

The laundry often uses up to 20% of the water consumed in our homes.

- Wait until you have a full load before using the washing machine
- Adjust the water level to suit the size of your wash load
- If buying a new washing machine, purchase a water efficient model with a AAA rating
- When hand-washing, wash clothes in a bucket and when finished use the water on the garden
- Install a grey water reuse system (available from hardware stores) but do it with care and always wash your hands after

In the Kitchen

Around 10% of water use in our homes occurs in the kitchen

- Fill the dishwasher so you have a full load before using it
- Use the 'rinse hold' function on your dishwasher rather than rinsing them beforehand
- Put the plug in the sink before rinsing vegetables
- Check for leaking taps and replace washers regularly
- Use only as much water as you need in the kettle
- If buying a new dishwasher, purchase a water efficient model with a AAA rating
- When boiling vegetables use just enough water to cover them and keep the lid on the saucepan



In the Bathroom & Toilet

Most of the water, around 40%, that we use inside the home is used in the bathroom and toilet.

- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth and shaving to save 5 litres of water
- Take a shorter shower, a shower only needs to be long enough to soap up, wash and rinse off
- Install a water saving shower rose
- Use a bucket in the shower to catch the water while you wait for it to heat up, use this on the garden
- Empty your dirty bathwater onto the garden using buckets
- Replace a single flush toilet with a dual flush toilet
- Use the half flush button when flushing the toilet
- If you don't have a half flush button place a brick or a container filled with water in the cistern, this reduces the amount of water used each time you flush
- Check your toilet for leaks, a leaking toilet can waste thousands of litres of water a year

For more information on water conservation visit our website www.gvwater.vic.gov.au or www.savewater.com.au



South West

The long dry spell can generate more work for Goulburn Valley Water and our contractors. Drier conditions can mean more stress on pipes and connections with soil movement and subsidence. Quite a lot of our leaks occur under concrete driveways in these conditions. The differing shrinkage rates of the soils under the concrete versus those in the open can cause extra stress on our water mains.

Even some pipes which have served well for decades can suffer during these prolonged dry spells. Usually in the old days there was no bedding material, just sand around the pipe and the ground movement is now affecting them.

The South West district, along with all other districts, places a high priority on fixing leaks, wherever and whenever they appear. However, it is simply not possible for staff to monitor the entire water network we manage without the support and involvement of the public. We always encourage the public to note these problems for us from the more obvious occurrences such as water running onto roads and pathways to the more obscure

such as 'green patches'. Once these are reported to us we will have an operator inspect the 'leak' and report back the severity of the situation.

All resultant leaks are then prioritised and dealt with accordingly. During times of extreme dry, the smaller leaks which would not normally be noticed now stand out because the surrounds are usually green. Having 14 towns in the South West district, we must rely on customer input. Factors considered in allocating a priority to the work include both the nature and volume of water lost in a leak as well as the water restrictions that apply in the specific community, relative to the restrictions that apply in other nearby communities where work may be required.

We have a Operations Centre based in Seymour and with the level of work load currently being experienced much of the work to repair faults is being shared with local contractors engaged by GVV. There is a commitment from GVV to investigate all leaks, as far as possible, on the day they are received and prioritise them accordingly. So I urge the customers to continue to report all leaks, along with other operating issues, to our 24 hour call centre on 1800 45 45 00. Other Administration or Technical queries may be made on 5832 0400

Neil Healey
South West



A high pressure leak Kilmore



Water Plan 2008-2013

We are currently preparing our five year water plan for 2008-2013. The water plan is a strategic document that identifies the services to be provided and a set of performance standards; details the capital investment and operating expenditure required to deliver those service standards; establishes the revenue that we will require to deliver the services sustainably; and sets a pricing regime across all our services to achieve the revenue requirements.

To assist in the development of this document, we need to understand our customers and the community's views

and concerns about proposed works across the region and proposed pricing structures. A community reference committee, consisting of 18 people from across the region, has been established to help us consult with our customers on this important document.

The draft water plan 2008-2013 will soon be available for public comment and we would appreciate your views via this process. Public Notices will be placed in local papers in May detailing how you can obtain a copy of the document for comments.



Water Patrols

All towns within our region are on water restrictions. The level of restrictions varies from region to region depending upon the supply source. Our operations staff across the region have been conducting regular water patrols for each town during and outside normal working hours.

Our customers also play an important role for our water patrols. When a customer notifies our 24 hour Customer Service Centre of a suspected breach of water restrictions our water patrols go out and investigate, and provide the

person with information on what they should be doing. In most instances the breaches have been a once off incident.

The water patrols reinforce the message about the importance of compliance with the water restrictions. By complying with the requirements of the water restrictions everyone benefits.

The manner in which our customers have embraced the requirements under the various water restrictions has been pleasing. We encourage customers to continue to use water wisely and thank them for their support. If you need to report a breach of water restrictions contact our 24 hour Customer Service Centre on Freecall 1800 45 45 00



Central Wastewater

The year is certainly flying by and the Central Wastewater team is extremely busy with the cannery season and the continuing dry weather affecting our farming operations.

SPC-Ardmona is one of our major trade waste customers generating waste in both Shepparton and Mooroopna. The increase in load on our wastewater management facilities appears quite suddenly and puts the micro-organisms in our treatment process under a lot of stress. The Operational staff have a lot to deal with in these circumstances to ensure all equipment is functioning adequately and responding to breakdowns in a timely manner.

The treatment system used at Shepparton, Mooroopna and Tatura wastewater management facilities involves anaerobic primary treatment, aerobic secondary treatment followed by lagoon storage. This system of treatment is very appropriate in areas where ample land is available and produces very good quality recycled water for very little energy input.

The anaerobic process uses micro-organisms (bugs) to consume carbon based wastewater and convert it into methane and bug biomass. The methane is typically burnt to reduce its greenhouse impact. GVW has commissioned a methane driven power generator at the Tatura wastewater management facility to utilise the valuable by-product to generate green energy. This technology will be able to be used at our Shepparton and Mooroopna wastewater management facilities in the future. ❖

Darren Sharman
Central Wastewater



Northern District

Some items of interest which have occurred in the Northern District since the last edition of my regular column include:

Extensive works at the Cobram wastewater management facility including lasering of 90 hectares, channel forming, new regulators, irrigation stops, recollection sump and associated infrastructure. The majority of these works are now completed.

The focus has been on pasture management with a successful summer crop of millet for stock and hay production completed. These improved works have assisted us in utilising reclaimed water more effectively.

We are pleased with the manner in which the project has been completed and the significant benefits it will bring.

The Nathalia wastewater management facility upgrades have been completed. We are now providing recycled water to a neighbouring property owner under a third party agreement. The property owner is using a centre pivot to establish a Lucerne crop.

The majority of works at the Katamatite water treatment plant relating to the construction of an additional raw water lagoon have also been completed. Further works have been undertaken to improve the water reticulation booster system. This will greatly assist in improving the quality of the town's supply and our ability to perform routine maintenance.

Operators have completed upgrade works to a number of sewer pump stations throughout the Northern area. These upgrades have consisted of new pump installations, switchboards, internal pipework, signage and general aesthetics. These works are designed to ensure optimum performance of the infrastructure. ❖

Mark Putman
Northern District



Central Water

Welcome from what is a relatively new team at Central Water. Changes to the District Manager's position and Works Coordinator's position since Christmas have seen a total change to the leadership at Central Water.

My previous role was in the Northern Territory with Power and Water. I was the Treatment Coordinator for the southern region of the Territory. My area covered Alice Springs, Yulara (Ayers Rock), Kings Canyon, Ti Tree, and Tenant Creek. It is an eye-opener to have come from an area considered desert with no water restrictions, and an abundance of ground water, to an area greatly affected by drought.

It is interesting to compare figures. A town the size of Alice Springs with 32,000 people has a daily consumption in summer of 55,000 kilolitres of water per day. Compare this to Shepparton's supply area of 40,000 people with, at present, a consumption of around 45,000 kilolitres of water per day. It shows what can be achieved by educating people on how to better use this scarce commodity.

It is heartening to see that not only Shepparton, but other areas such as Tatura, Kyabram and Tongala, along with smaller towns of Colbinabbin and Girgarre, have reduced water usage compared to last years figures, albeit as part the Stage 1 water restrictions.

Jason Whittaker has taken on the role of Works Co-ordinator. Jason returns to the Central Water team after spending 6 years working with the Strategy Assets and Environment team in the Shepparton Administration Office.

Together with two new starters in Wayne Hamilton and Rachael Lawlor, it has, I believe, given the Central Water team a fresh beginning so that we can now start to work on new projects, such as the new storages at Kialla and Maculata Drive. These storages will provide Shepparton with excellent water pressures all year round. Kyabram, Tatura and Tongala water treatment plants are presently having inline instruments upgraded allowing for better control of water quality.

Training is an ongoing priority. GVW is part of the National Competencies for Water Operations and as such it is very important to ensure that our staff are well trained and qualified to operate and maintain our assets. It is our objective that all Operational staff achieve Certificate III level. Presently three of our staff hold Certificate III, with another two close to attaining this level by the end of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the public for helping reduce their water usage in this time of drought conditions, and remind everyone to try and do more to help reduce the waste of such a precious resource. ❖

John Day
Central Water



Central O&M

The Central Operations group has been kept extremely busy over the past few months responding to drought related issues. These issues include repairs and maintenance to the water main systems, clearing of blocked sewers and responding to the many calls from customers relating to suspected breaches of water restrictions.

The water main system has been stressed with the dry weather and clay movement causing the older mains to crack and leak. The number of breaks has increased from 13 in October, 22 in November, 45 in December to 53 in January. To keep up with repairs our staff have been working many extra hours repairing water mains.

The dry spell has also caused trees in towns to seek out water from any option and on many occasions this has been from the gravity sewer mains. The sewer blockages in the Central district has increased steadily from 5 blockages per month in 2001/02, to 11 blockages per month last financial year, and to date this financial year we are averaging 12 sewer blockages per month.

Property Services

I will take this opportunity to remind all customers that they have a responsibility to ensure that no structures are placed over a sewer easement or pipeline. This includes placing fill or paving of any kind over a sewer easement or pipeline, or erecting a structure of any kind, without first seeking GVW's approval.

Plumbers are also reminded to forward to GVW a copy of the drainage sketch for each property as part of their certificate of compliance. We will shortly be refusing Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC) numbers for plumbers who have not complied with these requirements.

Failure to submit drainage plans causes many problems for owners in times of house drain blockages and building extensions.

For further information on this please contact the direct line to Property Services on Freecall 1800 064 714 or 58 32 0600.

24 hour Customer Service Centre.

The Customer Service Centre is a 24 hour service and they have been extremely busy answering over 1,600 phone calls in months of December and January; an increase of over 600 calls per month. Most of these calls have been about the water restrictions in all towns across the region.

The 24 hour Customer Service Centre can be contacted on Freecall 1800 45 45 00.

I encourage all customers to contact our service departments if clarification is required on any water related issues and thank them for their co-operation during a very difficult time for the water industry. ❖

Neville Whittaker
Central O&M



South East

Welcome to the autumn edition of my column. Water saving has once again been the focus this quarter and I would like to thank you for responding to our pleas to save water. We have had a significant drop in the water usage since the introduction of water restrictions.

I would like to say thanks to the CFA and DSE crew who spent long periods in the field fighting the fires prior to Christmas. Thanks also goes to my staff who managed to maintain water supply to the affected areas, and put

contingency plans into place to maintain supply if the worst case scenario happened. Thankfully it didn't.

On a brighter note, work has started on the new water treatment plant at Alexandra, and at this stage the completion date is September this year. Work is also underway for the provision of filters at the Yea water treatment plant. These will be a welcome addition to the plant and will improve water quality.

Stock and domestic supply taps have been installed at Alexandra, Yea and Marysville in partnership with Murrindindi Shire. These are for use by farmers and out of town residents looking for emergency water supplies. Anyone wishing to use this supply should contact the Shire. ❖

Ken Turner
South East