

# Goulburn Valley Water NEWS

Keeping you informed

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### MD's Column

Welcome to this edition of GVW News. Over the past 18 months, we have experienced the worst drought and lowest stream flows in Victoria's history. It is therefore extremely pleasing to see reasonable rainfall patterns returning to the region and our water storages beginning to recharge albeit slowly.

We still face significant challenges in both the Goulburn River and Murray River systems where zero water allocations have been announced as at 16 July. The need for Stage 3 and 4 water restrictions, which are in place across all systems, will be monitored as the region's storages continue to recover.

July 1<sup>st</sup> is the start of the new financial year and with this comes our third year of pricing regulation by the Essential Services Commission (ESC). In accordance with the ESC's pricing determination for Goulburn Valley Water our water, sewerage and volumetric tariffs have increased from 1 July 2007. The new residential tariffs are outlined in this newsletter. If you require information on tariffs for non-residential or vacant land, please contact our Customer Service Revenue team on 1300 36 00 07 or visit our website [www.gvwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au).

In the last newsletter we talked about the development of our next five year water plan. The Exposure Draft has been completed and will be submitted to the ESC for their consideration and approval at the end of July. The document will also be made available to the public for comment. If you are interested in finding out more about our water plan you will be able to download it from our website from early August.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the GVW 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](mailto:maryc@gvwater.vic.gov.au).

Laurie J Gleeson  
Managing Director

Anthony Kerr inspecting some maize while Peter Jackson (GVW) and Noel Russell look on



## Recycled Water

### A Valuable Resource

Over recent months there has been a lot of talk about recycled water as a valuable resource. You may not be aware that Goulburn Valley Water beneficially reused 86% of the recycled water produced over the last 12 months. The recycled water is beneficially used on a wide range of sites across the region including golf courses, our properties and neighbouring farms where it is used to grow pasture and crops for fodder. Recycled water is also used on blue gum plantations and more recently on a palm tree plantation.

In this edition we are highlighting one of the farmers who leases our property at Tongala for growing crops using recycled water. This property was previously owned by the Davies family and is now part of our wastewater management facility. In December 2006 we leased the property to Carl Russell who manages the site in accordance with the EPA guidelines for the use of recycled water.

The 90 hectare property has 70 hectares set up for flood irrigation. In the 2006/2007 irrigation season only 40 hectares was planted in maize due to the continuing drought and reduced irrigation allocations from G-MW. The

Russell's used a combination of recycled (115 megalitres) and channel water (120 megalitres) resulting in a 1 to 1 shandy ration to grow the maize. The Russell's worked with agronomist Anthony Kerr to get the maximum benefit from the nutrient in the recycled water. The final yield from the maize was approximately 18 - 20 tonnes of dry matter to the hectare.

The recycled water is generally high in phosphorus and nitrogen due to the nature of industrial waste in the Tongala area. Therefore, high yield crops like maize are grown to use the nutrients which helps maintain the soil balance making it a sustainable operation. The maize will be used as fodder for cattle.

Eventually the property will be planted in lucerne and managed as a cut and carry operation to remove nutrients from the recycled water applied to the land while maintaining soil health and ensuring long term sustainability of the site.

For more information on the use of recycled water visit our website, [www.gvwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au) or contact our Recycling Co-ordinator Stuart Harris on 5832 0448

### State Water Plan

In June, the Premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks, announced details of the State's plan to invest \$4.9 billion in major water infrastructure projects to significantly boost Victoria's water supplies.

The plan includes the construction of Australia's largest desalination plant to supply new water to Melbourne and a \$1 billion dollar investment in the Foodbowl Modernisation Project. This comprehensive modernisation strategy of the Goulburn and Murray irrigation systems has the potential to capture up to 450,000 megalitres of lost water annually. It is expected that the first stage of this project will deliver savings of up to 225,000 megalitres annually to be shared between the irrigation system, the environment and Melbourne. Melbourne's share of these water savings is up to 75,000 megalitres annually and will be delivered via a pipeline to be built connecting the Goulburn River to Sugarloaf Reservoir.

# Planning for Secure Water Supplies for 2055

In recent editions of GVW News we have outlined our long term planning document *GVW2055 – a sustainable urban water future*. This document is our strategy to manage the balance between demand for water and available water resources over the next 50 years. It determines the current and projected demands for each water supply system; determines current and future available water supplies; considers the impacts of climate change on supply and demand; identifies options to address emerging shortfalls in supply; and develops plans for each water supply system.

There are a number of recommendations in *GVW2055* for each water supply system. Three key recommendations include:

- introduce baseline demand management options for all town water supply systems;
- upgrade the storage and diversion capacity of the Delatite water supply system for Mansfield; and
- construct a pipeline to supplement the Sunday Creek water supply system for Kilmore, Broadford, Wandong-Heathcote Junction.

A brief summary of the recommendations is outlined below.

## Baseline Demand Management Options

The baseline demand management options focus on three in-house elements:

- Water efficient showerheads with 3 star rating or better in 50% of homes by 2020 and in 100% of homes by 2055.
- Water efficient washing machines with 4 star rating or better in 50% of homes by 2020 and 100% of homes by 2055.
- All evaporative air conditioners to comply with water efficiency standards.

In addition to the above items there are also strategies for demand reduction for outdoor water use.

The baseline demand management savings are dependent on the regulation for water saving standards for showerheads and washing machines, and mandatory water efficiency labelling for evaporative coolers. Through regulation of new appliances for new houses, and incentives

for existing houses, 100% adoption of the higher standards is targeted by 2055.

## Delatite River Water Supply System

*GVW2055* recommends increasing the Mansfield water storage by 320 megalitres. This will increase the total storage for Mansfield from 230 megalitres to 550 megalitres. We have identified suitable land for the additional storage and are currently applying for the necessary permits to enable us to purchase the land and construct the storage.

The design for the new storage has been completed and assuming that there are no objections to the proposed land purchase and construction we anticipate that we will engage contractors to start building the storage towards the end of 2007.

## Sunday Creek Water Supply System

One of the key strategies identified in *GVW2055* for the Sunday Creek water supply system is the construction of a pipeline from Tallarook to Broadford. A similar project was investigated in 2003 but

was subsequently put on hold as a result of Wallan being supplied by Yarra Valley Water. The recent dry conditions and subsequent water shortages have brought forward the pipeline project. We plan to construct a pump station on the Goulburn River near Tallarook and build a pipeline from the pump station to Broadford.

We have engaged Sinclair Knight Merz to investigate the pump station site and pipeline routes taking into account changes to design parameters and the increase in residential development since 2003. The investigation will include evaluating the impact that the alignment and construction of the pipeline may have on the area.

In addition to these three key recommendations others include developing a strategy to reduce water losses from the various systems, improving stream flow measurements and bulk water metering.

If you are interested in viewing the final *GVW2055* document you can download it from our website [www.gvwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au). ❖

## Changes to Corporate Structure of Goulburn Valley Water

In October 2006, the Victorian Parliament passed a significant piece of legislation - the *Water (Governance) Act 2006*. This Act made substantial amendments to the *Water Act 1989* dealing with a diverse range of issues including corporate structure, unbundling of water rights, sustainability principles and on the spot fines for breaches of water restrictions. A key reform enacted by this legislation is the establishment of water authorities as statutory corporations with a stronger governance framework.

This single corporate form will ensure that all government owned water businesses in Victoria operate with substantially similar governance arrangements. Effective from 1 July 2007 all regional water authorities (urban and rural) became water corporations.

1 July, Goulburn Valley Region Water Authority became **Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation**. Board Members became Directors of the Corporation and the Chief Executive Officer became the Managing Director of the Corporation and a member of the Board of Directors.

The new governance arrangements for Goulburn Valley Water, effective 1 July 2007 are as follows:

### Board of Directors

Jenny Houghton, Chair	Cathie Scott, Deputy Chair
Mike Hall	Denis Flett
Margaret Rae	Don Cummins
Mark Lawlor	Laurie Gleeson, Managing Director

### Executive Management Team

Laurie Gleeson .....	Managing Director
Allen Gale .....	General Manager-Technical Services
Graeme Jolly .....	General Manager-Financial Services
Peter Quinn .....	General Manager-Corporate Services

Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation will continue to trade as Goulburn Valley Water. The transition to the new corporate structure has been a fairly seamless and inexpensive process. ❖

## Is My Town's Drinking Water Fluoridated?

Over the past few months a number of communities have enquired if the town's drinking water supply is fluoridated. Many people are surprised when they find out that the majority of the towns within our region are not fluoridated.

There are only six towns with a fluoridated water supply within our region. These include:

- Shepparton,
- Mooroopna,
- Toolamba,
- Congupna
- Tallygaroopna; and
- Tongala.

Fluoridation is controlled and managed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) under the *Health (Fluoridation) Act 1973*. If a community wants its water supply fluoridated it is up to the community to approach DHS and seek approval for



funding to fluoridate the water supply. If DHS decides that a town's water supply should be fluoridated then we would act under the instruction of DHS to fluoridate the town's water.

To find out more about fluoridation visit the following web-sites.

**Australian Dental Association (Victorian Branch)**

<http://www.adavb.com.au>

**DHS Oral Health Promotion Strategy**

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthpromotion/>

**Dental Health Services Victoria**

<http://www.dhsv.org.au/>

**DHS**

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/water/fluoridation.htm>

**WHO**

[http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/oralhealth/en/print.html](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/oralhealth/en/print.html)

## Help prevent sewer blockages

In 2006/2007 our Central district experienced the highest number of sewer blockages in seven years. In 2000/2001 there were 56 blocked sewers and this year our Central team cleared 156 blocked sewers.

The high number of sewer blockages can be attributed to the long dry spell causing the trees to look for water. The fine tree roots enter the sewer main pipes via joints and small fractures and are causing damage to the sewerage system.

We have programs in place to rectify these issues including:

- a preventative sewer jetting program;
- a tree root foaming program which kills the fine roots but does not damage the overall health of the trees;
- a CCTV inspection program; and
- a sewer rehabilitation program which relines sewers found to be cracked or broken.

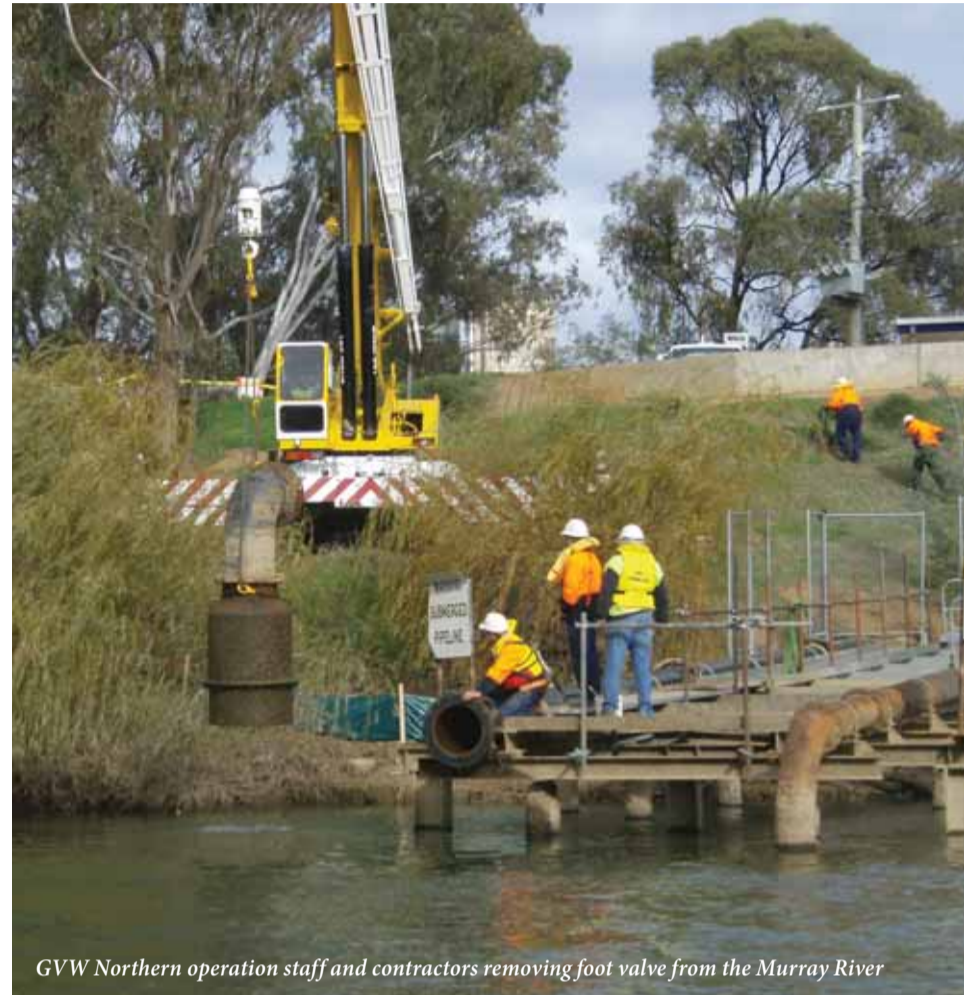
When a sewer does block, pressure builds up in the system and it is possible to have waste flow out of a property's

overflow relief gully. It's an opportune time to remind all our customers to make sure that their overflow relief gullies are functional.

Below are some tips to help maintain your overflow relief gully:

- make sure that the overflow relief does lift when pressurised this can be tested by lifting the grate;
- clear access over the gully grate e.g. do not cover with pot plants or other items;
- make sure the grate is in a position that is easy to access for maintenance;
- minimise the disposal of fats and oils down your kitchen sink and toilet;
- when planting trees make sure they are not located over or near drains and the sewer pipes; and
- dispose of sanitary items in the bin not the toilet.

The gullies should be installed and properly maintained in accordance with the plumbing code AS 3500. A plumber can advise customers on this code.



GVW Northern operation staff and contractors removing foot valve from the Murray River



The past couple of months have seen some rain that we all hope continues and is a welcome change. The drought conditions continue across the State and water projects continue to draw a lot of publicity. The Northern district has fielded a number of inquiries regarding water saving initiatives and water restriction implications.

The increasingly serious water shortage in the Murray-Darling Basin requires the Corporation to continue to enforce water restrictions. Our Northern team have been conducting regular water patrols outside normal working hours to reinforce the message about the importance of water restriction compliance.

The manner in which our customers have embraced the Corporation's staged water restriction obligations has been pleasing. Water restrictions continue across the district and I encourage customers to continue to use water wisely and thank them for their support. A special mention to our customers who have been on early heightened water restrictions at Numurkah, Wunghnu, Nathalia, and Picola. Your efforts have helped greatly in conserving our reduced water allocations.

Extensive works have occurred at the Cobram wastewater management facility including lasering of 90 hectares of irrigation land, channel forming, new regulators, irrigation stops, drainage collection sump and fencing.

The focus is now on pasture management with winter crops having been sown following a successful summer crop of millet. These improved irrigation works have assisted us in utilising recycled water more effectively. We are really pleased with the manner in which the project has been completed and look forward to the significant benefits it will bring.

The responsibility of operating and maintaining the ten Northern water treatment plants relies upon the co-operative work practices of the Northern team. Water treatment plants are located at Cobram, Yarroweyah, Strathmerton, Katamatite, Katunga, Numurkah, Wunghnu, Nathalia, Picola and Barmah. During winter less treated water is produced, and the focus is now on completing the extensive list of annual maintenance tasks.

Due to low flows in the Murray River the suction foot valve servicing the Cobram water treatment plant has recently been lowered to guarantee ongoing supply.

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.

If you have any inquiries in relation to our services or water restriction obligations please phone our customer service centre on **1800 45 45 00**.

**By Mark Putman**  
Northern District

## New Tariffs

As of 1 July 2007, new water, sewerage and volumetric tariffs have been introduced. These tariffs are

in accordance with the Essential Service Commission determination of Goulburn Valley Water's 2005-2008 Water Plan.

The new residential tariffs are as follows: Service	Tariff
Water Service Fee	\$112.97 per year
Water Volumetric Tariff	\$0.59 per kilolitre
Sewerage Service Fee Shepparton/Mooroopna	\$252.78 per year
Cobram, Euroa, Kyabram, Nagambie, Numurkah, Tongala, & Tatura	\$257.34 per year
Alexandra, Avenel, Broadford, Girgarre, Kilmore, Mansfield, Marysville, Merrigum, Murchison, Rushworth, Seymour, Stanhope, Strathmerton, Violet Town, Wandong and Yea	\$257.39 per year

Please note that these tariffs are for Residential Customers within a town water supply or sewerage district and do not necessarily apply to Supply-By-Agreement Residential Customers.

If you require information on tariffs for Supply-By-Agreement, Non-Residential or vacant land, please contact our Revenue Customer Service team on **1300 36 00 07** or visit our website [www.gvwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au).



**Central Wastewater**

The Central Wastewater team treats most of the wastewater generated by major industries within the Goulburn Valley. The cannery season has just finished and the loads at the Shepparton and Mooroopna sites have now dropped significantly. A lot of effort was employed this season to ensure that these sites ran as efficiently as possible.

Odours from our Mooroopna wastewater management facility (WMF) have reduced significantly due to implementation of a short and long term odour management plan, including:

1. some of the raw wastewater load has been transferred to the Shepparton WMF to reduce loads;
2. supplementary mixing of the covered anaerobic lagoon;
3. recirculation of effluent within open facultative lagoons;
4. the gas recovery and treatment system was upgraded; and
5. increased monitoring of the process was undertaken.

The measures had a real positive impact, although occasional odours were reported. We have been working closely with nearby residents and EPA to monitor progress and will continue to implement improvements over the next year.

Upgrading of the Kyabram WMF is well advanced with stage one now being operational and stage two being quite advanced. The old traditional trickling filter and other structures have been demolished, and all wastewater is now being treated in aerated lagoons. The upgrade of the facility should remove some of the limitations associated with the old plant and allow for more efficient operation.

Remember, please try to reduce, reuse and recycle. If we all do our part we all benefit.

**By Darren Sharman**  
Central Wastewater



**Central O&M**

Since the last Newsletter in April 2007 the Central Operations & Maintenance team has been extremely busy repairing 29 burst water mains, 117 cracked water mains and clearing 66 blocked sewers. This has kept the O&M team of 21 employees extremely busy, due to the continuing drought conditions we are experiencing and is requiring our team to work additional hours to keep up with the high work demand.

The Central O&M team consists of some very experienced employees and some relatively new staff members. The Central O&M operators have a total of 244 years experience attending to the needs and requirements of the Central O&M district. It is this experience and the operators dedication that forms a very effective team which operates in an efficient manner. The Central O&M team has one employee with over 30 years experience, four with over 20 years experience, three with over 15 years experience, five with over five years experience and eight with less than five years experience.

I would publicly like to take this opportunity to thank the operators and their families for their support and dedication to their duties over many years of service to the Corporation.

The operators will continue to carry out water patrol surveillance in each of the towns during and after hours as the water restrictions continue and breach notices will be handed out to customers as required. To date the customers have assisted the Corporation in this area and I am positive that this cooperative spirit will continue in the future. ❖

**By Neville Whittaker**  
Central Operations and Maintenance



**South East**

Welcome to this edition of my column. The autumn rainfall has been welcomed by everyone and has bought the country back to life. Although we have received some significant rainfall we still require much more to relieve the current water supply shortages and allow the easing of water restrictions. I would like to congratulate all our customers on their approach to water savings during the water restrictions and we have recorded some significant water savings in our area.

Major projects under construction or investigation in the South East district include:

- Alexandra water treatment plant - construction is well under way with completion expected in November.
- Yea water treatment plant filters - are nearing completion and should be commissioned in July.
- New Mansfield raw water storage - is planned to be tendered in July and completed during summer 2007/2008.
- Upper Goulburn Regional Water Supply Pipeline - a community reference group has now met twice in relation to this pipeline proposal.

The South East team has just completed the six monthly sewer main jetting program in all our towns to clean the mains prior to the expected winter peak inflows. This has been coupled with the wash down and cleaning of sewer pump stations.

Now that we have some reasonable rainfall the focus this quarter is on water quality. Very poor water quality has been observed in the Yea, Rubicon, Delatite and the upper reaches of the Goulburn Rivers. This is attributed to the impact that the fires had on the various catchments, as well as some drought impacts. Hopefully these problems will ease with revegetation and regrowth over the coming spring.

Just a final plea to all our customers, to keep up the great effort in conserving our water supplies. We are not out of the woods yet. ❖

**By Ken Turner**  
South East



**Central Water**

The onset of winter brings with it its own set of challenges for the Central Water team. Before the irrigation season ended our lead operators for Tongala, Tatura and Shepparton, Darryl Johnston, Jamie Madgwick and Peter Moore respectively, had to ensure that water storages were holding the maximum capacity to make sure that we would have enough water for the winter period.

This is a balancing act to make sure we have enough in supply to last to 14 August, when hopefully the irrigation season starts up and we can refill our storages. It also signals a time to start maintenance at these plants to prepare for the increased flows over summer.

One of our upcoming highlights for October for Water Week is to hold open days at Kyabram, Tatura and Shepparton plants so the general public can see what we do on a day to day basis to manage this balancing act. It's a great opportunity to show what we do from maintenance through to the science of treating water. All three plants, although similar in design, work differently to gain the end result, which is high quality water for the Central district.

One of the highlights from the last couple of months was holding our first yearly business review with the Senior Management Group which is a great opportunity to explain the challenges we face, as well as celebrate the successes we have achieved. Highlights from this review were:

- Ongoing training of our staff to complete Certificate III in Water Operations.
- New projects such as the installation of micro filtration plants to our smaller towns.
- Increases in our storages to meet the growing demands of all towns within our district.
- The change from reactive to proactive maintenance utilising the Hansen computer based maintenance system.
- The formation of our leadership group to retain knowledge, share information and mentor new employees.

The review was very well received by all parties and plans for next year's review have already started.

Before I sign off I hope everyone takes advantage of the open days at Shepparton, Kyabram, and Tatura on 28 October as part of Water Week. As mentioned it's a great opportunity to show our wares, as well as receiving some feedback on the quality of our water. ❖

**By John Day**  
Central Water Treatment



**South West**

After a long dry spell it's pleasing to report that the water resource position in the Euroa, Longwood and Violet Town systems has improved considerably. With consistent rain in

the Strathbogie Ranges the catchment is again filling the storages in that immediate region. The situation in the Sunday Creek catchment is not as favourable and we were carting water from Seymour to Broadford until 18 July.

However, the Sunday Creek and Wescott Creeks, which supply run off to Sunday Creek storage, are now running again. We have made preparation to allow the supply of water from Yarra Valley Water, back into

the Goulburn Valley Water system at South Mountain Road Wandong. A pump has been installed and tested in preparation to cross connect the two systems if needed.

Hopefully we will receive good rainfall from now on and the temporary pump system is not needed. ❖

**By Neil Healey**  
South West