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## CEO's Column



Laurie J Gleeson  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to the latest edition of Goulburn Valley Water News. This edition sees us entering a new era for the Victorian Water Industry. Effective from 1 July 2005, the water industry has a new economic regulator—the Essential Services Commission (ESC). ESC also regulate the electricity, gas, rail, grain and port industries. They regulate and have the final say on what we charge our customers and what we can spend on capital works and operations. The ESC has approved our water and sewerage tariffs for the financial year 2005/2006. The new tariffs fixed by ESC have been set to encourage water conservation in line with Government policy. Full details of our new tariff structures are outlined on Page 2.

Also under ESC we were required to develop a new Customer Charter. A summary document has been delivered with our Water Accounts (refer to the article on this page for further details).

Are you in the process of buying or selling a property? If you are then you should read the article on Page 3. This article outlines what your solicitor, conveyancer should do for you.

Over 17 years ago our employees established the GVW Charity Fund. This fund raises money throughout the organisation and distributes the funds across the Goulburn Valley region. Details on our Charity Fund activities are outlined on page 3.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. If you have any feedback or would like additional information on any of the articles please contact Mary Connelly-Gale on 03 5832 0471 or e-mail maryc@gvwater.vic.gov.au

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## World Water Day

We all know that water is vital for human health and well-being. Our society is dependant upon water for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the alleviation of poverty and hunger.

Since 1993, the United Nations General Assembly has designated 22 March each year as World Water Day. It

was an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. This year, World Water Day kicked off the International Decade for Action "Water For Life" which provides the international community with an opportunity to move towards the sustainable management of water for the generations to come.

To help spread the water message and to celebrate World Water Day we offered four schools across the region a tour of their local water treatment plant. Participating schools included:

• 24 Year 8 students from Christ the King Anglican College – Cobram

• 28 students, from a special Environment, SOSE Class (Years 8-10) at Nathalia Secondary College  
• 28 Students from St Augustine's – Kyabram  
• 80 year 6 Students from St Patrick's – Kilmore.

To help students understand how we treat water, our staff gave a brief overview on the water treatment process and then took them on a tour of the facility to see the process in action. In addition to the water

treatment process information, students were also provided with a comparison between water production and water availability in Australia and in third world countries.



St Augustine's year 8 students visited the Kyabram Water Treatment Plant as part of World Water Day

## New Water and Sewerage Tariffs

From 1 July 2005, new water and sewerage tariffs come into effect for all our customers. The new pricing structure has been set by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and marks the first time the independent regulator has taken control of Victorian water prices from the State's water businesses.

The price structure is higher than initially indicated in our three year Water Plan. It is hoped that the higher price will encourage the efficient use of a finite resource. The ESC believes that our proposed lower pricing would not send the right message to our customers and would not encourage sustainable use of our water resources. Hence their decision to fix a higher percentage increase for towns across our region.

The impact on the overall water bill for the average customer, based on a water consumption of 328 kilolitres per year, will range from \$15 per year in towns such as Alexandra, Seymour and Yea to \$54 per year for Mooroopna and Shepparton.

Full details of the new water and sewerage tariffs are outlined on page 2.

## Customer Charter

In consultation with our customers a new Customer Charter has been developed based on the Essential Services Commission's (ESC) Customer Service Code. This charter was approved by the ESC in late June .

The aim of the Customer Charter is to inform you of the rights and responsibilities of Goulburn Valley Water and your rights and responsibilities to us.

The Charter sets out performance targets that we aim to achieve in relation to the delivery of water and sewerage services.

A summary of the Customer Charter has been sent to all our customers with their first account for 2005/2006. Copies of the full Customer Charter can be obtained by downloading it from our website www.gvwater.vic.gov.au, or by calling our Customer Service Staff on 1300 360 007, or visiting our office in Shepparton, 104-110 Fryers Street Shepparton.

The Customer Charter is also available in Italian, Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Albanian.

## Water and Sewerage Tariffs

Goulburn Valley Water's tariffs are based on the User Pays system. Customers that have water and sewerage services available to their property are charged a standard rate for the provision of the services and an additional usage charge based on the volume of water measured by their property meter. The tariffs outlined below have been approved by the Essential Services Commission and are effective for a 12 month period from 1 July 2005. All charges are per annum unless otherwise indicated.

### Water

All Districts are charged the same Water Service Charge.

Meter Size	Residential / Non-Residential	Meter Size	Residential / Non-Residential
Vacant Land- Unconnected	\$50.47	80	\$1,615.29
20	\$100.95	100	\$2,523.90
25	\$157.73	150	\$5,678.78
32	\$258.44	200	\$10,095.61
40	\$403.82	250	\$15,774.40
50	\$630.97		

Properties with Fire Services Connected – 10% of service availability charge (where applicable)

### Water Usage Charge

All Districts	Residential / Non-Residential
Volumetric charge per kL	\$0.5135
Unmetered Volumetric Charge per annum <sup>1</sup>	\$84.72

<sup>1</sup>The small number of properties that are not metered are charged the equivalent of 165kL. per year

### Sewerage

District	Customer Type	Service Charge	Volumetric Charge per kL.
Shepparton and Mooroopna	Residential	\$216.32	Not Applicable
	Vacant Land - Unconnected	\$108.16	Not Applicable
	Non-Residential	\$232.43	*\$0.8052
Cobram, Euroa, Kyabram, Nagambie, Numurkah, Nathalia, Tongala and Tatura	Residential	\$232.43	Not Applicable
	Vacant Land - Unconnected	\$116.21	Not Applicable
	Non-Residential	\$232.43	*\$0.8052
Alexandra, Avenel, Broadford, Girgarre, Kilmore, Mansfield, Marysville, Merrigum, Murchison, Rushworth, Seymour, Stanhope, Strathmerton, Violet Town, Wallan, Wandong and Yea	Residential	\$238.01	Not Applicable
	Vacant Land - Unconnected	\$119.00	Not Applicable
	Non-Residential	\$238.01	*\$0.8052

\*The volumetric sewerage charge is calculated based on water supplied to the property as measured by the water meter. A discharge factor is applied to the measured water consumption to estimate the volume of wastewater being discharged to the sewer system. An "allowance" of 180 kilolitres is deducted from this calculated volume and the volume in excess of this amount is charged at \$0.8052 per kilolitre. One 1 kilolitre = 1,000 litres.

### All Districts - Special Charges 2005/2006

District	Details	Volumetric Charge per kL
All Districts	Outside the District Service Charges for Water and Sewerage shall be the same charge as that applying within the relevant district	
Euroa	Raw Water –Supplied before treatment plant	\$0.3923
Mooroopna	Raw Water Scheme	\$0.2573
Nagambie	Raw Water Scheme	\$0.3331
Seymour	Raw Water Scheme	\$0.2573
Tongala	Raw Water Scheme	\$0.3598



## Taps Turn for Yarroweyah

The residents of Yarroweyah now have access to a potable town water supply.

In early March we were pleased to announce that the potable water supply was ready for Yarroweyah residents to connect into. Thanks to the Cobram to Strathmerton pipeline the Authority was able to offer the residents of Yarroweyah the opportunity to have a town water supply, which was supported by nearly 70% of the property owners.

We first went to Yarroweyah with the proposal in July 2003, there was overwhelming support at the public meeting and a working group of residents and Authority employees was established to get the project off the ground. The residents were an invaluable part of the process, without them championing the project the community may still only have access to bore water.

The working group also saved their community a significant amount of money by suggesting that the plumbing of the service main be undertaken by the whole town, rather than by the individual property owners. Initial costs indicated that a property owner could expect to pay somewhere between \$700 and \$1000 depending on which side of the road their property was on. The Authority then asked for a price to do the whole town at once and the indication was it would cost approximately \$500 per property. In the end, it was even cheaper coming in at \$245 per property.

The overall project excluding the property service pipes, is expected to come in on budget at around \$220,000 of which the community has contributed approximately \$150,000.

The Authority allowed water to be delivered to Yarroweyah, prior to the Cobram to Strathmerton pipeline being fully commissioned to Strathmerton. As an incentive to get residents to connect their property to mains straight away, which will assist with the operation of the water supply, the Authority also offered residents three months worth of water for free if the meter was fitted before the end of April.

# A Part of Regional Communities

Did you know that Goulburn Valley Water's commitment to the local community goes way beyond supplying water and sewerage services.

In 1988, a handful of our staff created the Goulburn Valley Water Charity Fund, with the main aim of raising funds to assist the local community. Since its creation, the Charity Fund Committee has operated continuously and raised then distributed around \$81,000 to regional communities.

The committee also organises staff to contribute to their communities in non monetary ways. Staff are encouraged to support the Australian Red Cross, SPC-Ardmona's "Share-A-Can" initiative, contribute regularly to regional blood banks and more recently participation in the City of Greater Shepparton's "Meals on Wheels" program.

Our staff are intimately involved with the human side of the community and can appreciate the extent of unavoidable personal hardship and adversity that exists in our region.

Through the Charity Fund, staff have demonstrated a genuine desire to become involved and assist regional communities.

Money for the Charity Fund is raised via staff payroll contributions and from a range of fundraising events held throughout the year, such as film nights, casual clothes days, morning teas and raffles just to name a few.

This workplace charity program has certainly increased the community awareness of staff within the Authority, with around 43% of Shepparton based staff now electing to contribute around \$5,300 per year through regular salary deductions.

Goulburn Valley Water's Charity Fund was recently recognised for its contribution to the community by being awarded the region's Community Fund Award Corporate Category for its contribution to local communities. It is the firm intention of the Charity Fund to continue to encourage and promote staff involvement in community activities to "make a real difference in the community".

# Wallan Pipeline Nearing Completion

The project extending Melbourne's water supply up to Wallan and Hidden Valley is 60% complete and on track for completion at the end of this year.

Yarra Valley Water Managing Director, Tony Kelly said that 17 kilometre's of the 21 kilometre pipeline between Mt Ridley and Wallan had been constructed. Work was undertaken in several stages, with two stages finished and two nearing completion.

Once the pipeline is constructed new pump stations at Craigieburn and Kalkallo will allow

water to be delivered to Wallan in early 2006. Work on the Kalkallo pump station has started with all underground work comprising site drainage and pipework finished.

"A new storage tank at Mt Ridley has been built to supply the surrounding areas and store the water supply for Wallan. With the major structural and supporting pipe work complete, construction of the roof is underway. The tank sits on the top of Mt Ridley near Craigieburn on the edge of the metropolitan area and can be seen on the right side of the Hume



Construction of the 22km water supply pipeline from Mt. Ridley to Wallan

# Buying or Selling a Property – What you need to know

If you are buying or selling a property, outlined below are a number of actions, in relation to your Goulburn Valley Water Account, you should ensure your solicitor / conveyancer undertakes on your behalf when buying or selling a property.

## Purchaser Information

If you are purchasing a property,

- An Information Statement should be obtained by your solicitor / conveyancer to inform you of any relevant information and charges regarding the property.
- Prior to settlement your solicitor / conveyancer should apply to Goulburn Valley Water for a Special Meter Reading (if meter connected) to provide the amount of water consumption used (and not billed) since the last Account was issued.
- Your solicitor / conveyancer will make some "adjustments" on the water usage and daily service fees (as applicable). A cheque may be drawn at settlement or an amount may be deducted from your purchase price as what you allow to the vendor.
- The settlement cheque (if one is drawn) will be sent to us to be credited to the property's Account. Please note that a new Account is not started at settlement date for that property; you take over the previous owners' Water Account.
- After settlement, your solicitor / conveyancer will send through a Notice of Acquisition advising that you have purchased the property so that we can update our records.
- Please ensure your solicitor / conveyancer is aware of your correct postal address so we can update this at the time of processing the Notice of Acquisition.

## Vendor Information

If you are selling your property:

- An Information Statement should be obtained by your solicitor / conveyancer to inform you of any relevant information and charges regarding your property.
- Prior to settlement, your solicitor / conveyancer will do "adjustments" to pay your proportion of the Account up until settlement date. Adjustments should include all relevant charges levied since the last billed date and a Special Meter Reading (see Purchaser Information).
- A cheque may be drawn at settlement or an adjustment to the settlement payment may be deducted from your sale price as the amount you allow to the purchaser.
- The settlement cheque (if one is drawn) will be sent to us to be credited to the property's Account. Please note that a final Account is not issued to the vendor; the purchaser takes over your Account.
- After settlement, your solicitor / conveyancer will send us through a Notice of Disposition advising that you have sold the property so that we can update our records. Please ensure your solicitor / conveyancer has your forwarding address so we can update your postal address.
- If you have been sent a Water Account in the month before your settlement date, please check with your solicitor / conveyancer on whether you should pay the Account as they may include the unpaid Account in their settlement adjustments.

If you are unsure, please consult your settlement papers and for any issues, please discuss with your solicitor / conveyancer.

*If you have any queries, please feel free to contact our Customer Service Staff on 1300 360 007.*

Highway as you head into Melbourne," he said.

"We are really pleased that the construction companies contracted to build this project have worked hard from the start. Their efforts together with the project being broken up in stages has helped us to minimise overall construction time," said Mr Kelly.

The transfer of water will help Broadford, Waterford Park, Kilmore and Wandong-Heathcote Junction, as more

water will be available for these towns from Goulburn Valley Water's Sunday Creek reservoir. It will also reduce demand on the reservoir and relieve the supply pressure on these towns.

"This is a major infrastructure project which will provide security of supply as the population in the area increases. We are working closely with Goulburn Valley Water which is undertaking improvements to local sewerage systems and implementing a recycled water scheme which Yarra Valley Water will take over and operate in 2006," said Mr Kelly.

## Central Water By Garry McGraw



In Central Water over the last 4 months we have completed our annual maintenance program with numerous pumps being completely overhauled. We have also recently commissioned our new 150 megalitre raw water storage at Tatura and it is now in use. Work is proceeding on a backwash water recovery project at Tongala. This will reduce the volume of water wasted during the water treatment process. Work is also progressing on the commissioning of two new eight megalitre capacity water storage tanks at north Shepparton near Tarcoola and south Shepparton in Kialla Lakes.

During February the storms we experienced created some real challenges for our water treatment technicians. The water quality in the Goulburn River was very poor and we had to be innovative and change our processes to keep the plants operating effectively.

The warmer weather this year extended all the way through the Autumn period and nearly into winter, which resulted in the demand for water supply from the Central water treatment plants being higher than normal.

Below is a snapshot of water consumption in megalitres (1,000,000 litres) for the major towns in the Central district for the month of May.

Year	Shepparton	Tatura	Kyabram
2004/2005	1,038	161	99
2003/2004	831	148	72
2002/2003	813	141	65
2001/2002	975	139	84
2000/2001	945	119	71
1999/2000	774	101	74

## Northern District By Mark Putman



It certainly has been a busy period within Goulburn Valley Water's Northern area. A number of significant projects are nearing completion and will help improve services delivered to customers. These projects include:

**Cobram water treatment plant** - Our contractor, Water Treatment Australia has made significant progress on a new Dissolved Air Flotation and Filtration (DAFF) water treatment plant with associated clear water storage and backwash tank. Commissioning of the new plant is expected to occur before the end of the 2005.

**Yarroweyah** - to date 25 residents have taken advantage of this new supply. I encourage all residents to take advantage and connect as soon as they can.

**Strathmerton** - Following completion of the new Cobram to Strathmerton pipeline the contractor is finalising pump connections between the new one megalitre storage and the existing Strathmerton standpipe. This transfer from bore water to the pipeline supply from Cobram is expected to occur by September, and will be welcomed by Strathmerton residents and Goulburn Valley Water.

**Nathalia water treatment plant** - residents may have noticed a lot of work occurring at this plant. We are currently finalising a major refurbishing of the plant with the installation of a new chemical dosing systems and water quality instruments. This will allow for more consistent, high quality water to be produced.

**Cobram and Nathalia wastewater management facilities** - removal of biosolids from lagoons using a floating suction dredge has occurred at Nathalia and Cobram. The biosolids at Nathalia have been dried and stockpiled for future reuse. Drying of biosolids at Cobram will occur next summer.

The Northern team is currently undertaking a number of preventative maintenance programs to ensure we continue to provide high quality water and wastewater services. I look forward to providing further updates relating to happenings within the Northern District in future editions.

## South East By Ken Turner

Welcome to this edition of my column. The rains have finally broken and given us some relief. May I take this opportunity to thank the customers of the district for their support in conserving our water supplies over the long extended summer period.

Some significant works have been completed this financial year which include:

- Completion of the Yea water treatment plant and high station upgrades at a cost of \$56,000
- Benalla Road, Mansfield sewer pumping station renewal for better security of our wastewater system.
- Replacement of pumps and electrics at the Craigie Street sewer pump station in Yea.
- Renewal of the water disinfection plant at Sawmill Settlement
- Filter inspection at Mansfield water treatment plant.

Winter maintenance is under way to ensure continued high quality water and wastewater services. Maintenance on our sewer pump station pumps will commence in July. Maintenance on our water treatment plants will commence in August and flushing programs in our water reticulation are about to commence. These programs will greatly benefit the quality services provided by GVW.

A tender for the design work for a new winter water storage at Marysville has been awarded. When constructed, this will allow recycled water to be used for irrigation of the Marysville golf course.

This year we also plan to develop a wetlands area at the Alexandra wastewater management facility. This will provide an area for our local wild life and native flora.

I look forward to providing you with further updates from the South East District in future editions of GVW News.

## South West By Neil Healey



During the past two months the focus in the South West District has been on preventative maintenance works.

The townships of Seymour, Broadford and Kilmore have received jetting and foaming maintenance on selected underground sewers. The process involves selecting sewers which have a history of blockages, usually caused by tree root infiltration, or which are in environmentally sensitive areas.

The actual treatment involves cutting and jetting of the sewers to remove any tree roots and restore the sewers to a condition where no further obstructions exist. The next step is to inject root retardant foam into the sewer. This is designed to prevent root growth for a period of five years, but does not affect the health of the trees. The final step in this process is to use a video camera to assess the effectiveness of the program.

This type of maintenance can save a lot of money in the long term as it prevents further damage caused by tree roots and defers sewer replacement work.

We have also performed routine, preventative maintenance at most of our water treatment plants. We have a large plant servicing Wallan, Kilmore and Wandong/Heathcote Junction, and other separate facilities for Broadford, Pyalong, Seymour, Nagambie, Longwood and Euroa.

Our technicians, Peter Huggins and Nick Coulson, have been undertaking the maintenance with the assistance of contractors.

Peter and Nick are also assisted in this work by our water treatment team lead by Nick Bray. The water treatment team is required to produce water of the highest quality as set out under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Well maintained plants allow them to meet these targets at all times.



Tatura Raw Water Storage pre and post filling