



## Introduction

It's been a busy few months with LVW representation at Customer Advisory Groups (CAGs), Environmental Water Advisory Groups (EWAGs), Targeted Consultations, Community Forums, IPART Productivity Commission Reviews, and NSW Irrigators Council (NSWIC) meetings. Additionally, announcements from the Federal Water Minister generated much discussion within the industry, prompting us to work with the NSWIC for a coordinated response regarding our position. The next few months will be "interesting" given the combination of new River Operators, centralized contact for WaterNSW, and the fact that this is likely to be the first year since 2017 that water will be both available and needed.

## River Operations

Wyangala Dam is currently sitting at 100%, with a flow increase from 1300Mg to 2500Mg starting yesterday (31 Aug 23) from 2pm.



During the most recent CAG WaterNSW advised that that costs of the Lake Cargelligo embankment are estimated to be around \$36M (instead of the IPART approved budget of \$11.5M in 2021). LVW wrote to WaterNSW to express our concern over the significant increase in costs and how the project is being managed. The response we received was unsatisfactory, and we have since written to the NSW Water Minister detailing our concerns and urging The Minister for the additional costs to be funded by the NSW Government. We are yet to receive a response.



Environmental water managers have recognized that after several wet years of back-to-back dam spills with extensive flooding, most of the catchment requires a drying phase. Watering events will be minimal in the short term to allow the natural cycle to take place, however planning is needed in the event intervention is needed for waterbird and fish breeding. Water will be reserved for the event that Pelicans nest again at lake Brewster and water levels surrounding drop at a rate that will compromise successful breeding. The Booligal ibis rookery is another potential site requiring environmental water in the event a breeding event naturally initiates. Monitoring over Spring and Summer will help determine if repeat watering is required for

sites like Dry lake that only received water at the peak of the flood and not the entire duration, refuge sites for olive perchlet may also require water late in Summer this is yet to be determined. Booberoi creek has works planned for the bridge at the upstream end, if this takes place the creek will need to be dry for months, they have an option to use irrigation infrastructure to bypass the works and water further down the creek for fish refuge.



Australian Murray Cod

The environmental water managers have proposed a Murray Cod nesting flow is proposed from Late August/September to December. The purpose of the flow is to ensure stable flows without significant drops in water level during the cod nesting period. As high irrigation demand is expected it is unlikely to have a high-water use. Target stretches will be downstream of Jemalong and Hillston. Proposed monitoring is to sample for larval drift throughout the nesting period and follow up electrofishing in Autumn to gauge recruitment success. This flow is proposed to be in channel and have a secondary objective of providing refuge in the core Cumbung reedbed for species that have recruited in the floods (birds, fish and frogs).

## Floodplain Management Plans

DPE have recently published their "What We Heard Report" resulting from their community consultations earlier this year. [Click Here to see the report.](#) They are still accepting flood information and photographs and are keen to make contact with people who will be affected by the reforms. If you'd like to submit flood photos or discuss how you were impacted by the floods, please email

[floodplain.planning@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:floodplain.planning@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

## Non-Urban Water Metering Regulations

The Minister has directed DPE to commence a review of non-urban water metering regulations to make it easier for water users across the state to become compliant and to ensure water use is being measured and managed fairly and sustainably. The review is to address some of the known barriers to compliance. Targeted consultation occurred throughout Jul/Aug with commencing September 2023.

LVW attended a targeted consultation session on 16 Aug 23 along with representatives from the NSWIC. Ria Pryce led the session with members of the DPE metering review team and representatives from other water agencies participating in the meeting. Several barriers we have highlighted were already recognised by DPE, however, members shared further barriers such as in situ unsuitability of meters, issues with DAS and iWAS, and overlapping policies which prevent water users accessing exemptions. NSWIC raised the need for an automatic temporary exemption to protect water users while barriers beyond control are addressed.

Keep an eye on the [Water DPIE website](#) to see when public consultation is announced for your opportunity to provide individual feedback.

## Basin Plan

On 22 Aug 23 The Minister for the Environment and Water announced an agreement of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministers (minus Victoria) to deliver the Basin Plan in full ([Click Here to see the full agreement](#)).

The Agreement provides as follows:

1. The Commonwealth will use its best endeavours to amend the Commonwealth's Water Act 2007 to implement the Basin Plan in full by:
  - extending time to deliver Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) supply and constraints projects until 31 December 2026;
  - allowing for Basin states to bring forward new supply projects provided they can be achieved by no later than 31 December 2026;
  - a reconciliation of SDLAM project outcomes by the MDBA to be completed by 31 December 2026; and
  - recovering 450 GL of water for enhanced environmental outcomes.

LVW met with NSWIC and their members to assess the impact of the announcement and strategise how best to move forward given that there were some positives

to come from the announcement such as the time extension to deliver the plan. NSWIC and LVW have released separate media releases condemning the buy-back inclusions. The LVW media release has so far been picked up by 7 News Central West, and Mid-West Media.

What was a looming risk is now a looming reality as the Government has now said buying back water for environmental purposes remains included in the plan, rather funding efficiency measures which have a neutral or positive socio-economic outcome. This requires a legislative change, so our fates are now in the hands of the Greens and Independents ([Click Here for ABC's Announcement coverage and Political Assessment](#)).

It's been LVW's position that there are other ways to achieve healthier rivers aside from simply buying more water, and that if the Government really wants on-ground outcomes it should invest in projects that provide wider benefits such as carp control, riparian zone management, and reducing cold water pollution. NSWIC are lobbying the NSW Premier and NSW Water Minister to step in to stop the Commonwealth from buying back water in NSW and have urged the NSW Government to seek independent legal advice on what options they have available to avoid further buy backs.



Brewster Weir

## AGM

Our AGM is being held this Thursday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, at the Hillston Ex-Servicemen's & Citizens Club on High St Hillston. The AGM will start at 9.30am and will close just after 10am when a light morning tea will be served. Following morning tea, we have a number of guest speakers including Dr Marita Person speaking on Modern Fish Screening, Dr Adam Kerezsy speaking on Fish in the Lachlan and Murry Darling Basin, Shaun Gleeson who will provide an update on WaterNSW Operations, Claire Miller speaking on NSW IC priorities and projects, and Malcolm Holm who will provide NFF's perspective on Basin Management and NFF priorities. Lunch will be served around 1pm. If you've like to RVSP for catering purposes please email [eo@lvw.com.au](mailto:eo@lvw.com.au) or call 0411447025. All members are invited to attend.

## Farewells



Mary Ewing

*"I've enjoyed working for Lachlan Valley Water over the past 24 years and dealing with a wide range of water-related matters over that time. I'd like to thank everyone very much for your involvement in meetings, committees, ongoing discussions and all the water issues, and your support for Lachlan Valley Water as an industry organisation over many years."*

Mary Ewing

After some 24 years in the industry and a founding member/employee of LWV, Mary Ewing stepped down as EO earlier this month and will leave the employment of the organisation after the AGM to enjoy her retirement. In the short time I've been here with LWV I've seen how widely respected Mary is throughout the industry, including the government agencies we deal with. I know she will be greatly missed by the organisation, as will her impressive wealth of knowledge, facts, figures, and history of water regulation. We wish Mary well for her retirement and thank Mary for her many years of dedication and hard work.

Also leaving us is our Admin Assistant, Nina Crawford. Nina has been with the organisation for in a part-time capacity for many years, and has been responsible for our bookkeeping, and keeping LVN in the black through membership renewals etc. We'd also like to thank Nina for her work and wish her well in her future endeavours. Taking over Nina's role is Forbes local Juliet Hodder.

## Updates

### Evaporation Calculations

During the last Lachlan CAG, DPE was tasked with providing communication around how calculation of evaporation will work. These will be published on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> of September as part of the next routine Water Allocation Statement for the Lachlan River.

### Hyper Yielding Crops – NSW Annual Field Day.

The "Hyper Yielding Crops" NSW Annual Field Day is being held on 10th of October 2023, 10am-4pm, at the NSW Crop Technology Centre Wallendbeen NSW.

[Click Here](#) for more details and to register.

### Critical Producer Grant Applications Closing

The Critical Producer Grant is closing to applications at 5pm on 30 September 2023. This grant complements the \$75,000 Special Disaster Grant available to primary producers impacted by the catastrophic storms and floods that occurred from February 2022 onwards. It's targeted towards producers who operate in specific sectors within the agriculture, horticulture or aquaculture industries, to ensure they have the ability to fully rebuild, recover and become more resilient. For info or to apply, visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/cpg) or call the Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW on 1800 319 45

### Cattle Underpass Scheme

Remember to get your applications in for the Dairy Cattle Underpass Scheme (CUPS). Applications are now being assessed. If you are, (or know) a producer who would benefit from an underpass or warning signs and lights on farm, now is the time to submit applications in order to be considered for approvals. For more info and to apply visit [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/cups](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/cups)



Please get in contact if you have any comments or questions about any issues in this newsletter.

Glenn Daley,  
Executive Officer, Lachlan Valley Water  
PO Box 819, FORBES NSW 2871

[eo@lvw.com.au](mailto:eo@lvw.com.au)

P: 02 6851 2538

M: 0411 447 025

W: <https://lvw.com.au>