



Lachlan Valley Water e-News

PO Box 819, Forbes 2871

July 2024

River Operations Update

Wyangala Dam. 94.2% with inflows of 1930ML and releases of 4500ML. Releases will be maintained with an aim of dipping to 93% in mid-August, and then increasing to 95% full at the end of August depending on the weather outlook. If more weather events look likely, the dam may continue to operate at a lower level for flood mitigation. Wyangala penstock outage is planned from 29 Jul 24 for 4 weeks (same time that HEPS outage is planned for).



Lake Cargelligo. Sitting around 92.2% full and can go to full capacity of 100%.

Lake Brewster Sitting at just over 74% with a capacity limitation of 79.5%.

Most demand will be managed with current tributary flows and release from Lake Cargelligo and Lake Brewster. Any excess flow will be captured in Lake Brewster and Lake Cargelligo when storage capacity allows

Buybacks Begin

The first of three Commonwealth buyback tenders planned in the southern Basin in 2024-25 began this month. Aboriginal Water Entitlement Purchases are also expected to get underway this water year, as well as more Bridging the Gap tenders in northern Basin valleys.

The first southern Basin tender is 'targeted' to private diverters and seeking up to 70 GL. The second seeking sales of large portfolios of more than 20 GL each will

get going in the first quarter of 2025. The third, open to all, will get underway in the second quarter of 2025.

This large and concentrated Government intervention in the southern water market will drive up entitlement prices; already, the water register shows the Government paying more than 30 per cent above the market in its relatively small Bridging the Gap tender last year.

The minister declared she considered the social and economic impacts before approving these buybacks. Considered maybe, but clearly ignored when ABARES says past and planned water recovery wipes \$602 million – \$914 million every year from what the farmgate value of irrigated agriculture would otherwise be.

Meeting with Steph Cooke

Ed Fagen and I met with Member for Cootamundra and shadow Minister for Water, Steph Cook MP, and her water specialist, Mark MacNamara, in Cowra on Wednesday 17 Jul 24. We discussed our concerns over the water pricing and the increasing financial pressures being put on water users through legislative requirements, WaterNSW's upcoming pricing proposal, the lack of tangible projects in the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy including the impact of the shelving of the Wyangala Wall Raising project. Steph and Mark were sympathetic and offered to take work closer with us and escalate any concerns through the appropriate channels when they arose.



NSWIC General Meeting

LVW Chair Tom Green and I attended the NSWIC General Meeting in the Hunter Valley 3-4 Jul 24. During the meeting we received presentations on the MDB Water Recovery Framework from DCCEW staff, Indigenous Special Access Licences from DPIE, and a great presentation from Peter Holt from HWL Ebsworth Lawyers on the legal standing of some of the rule changes being experienced further north. The day was capped off by cracking speaker Brian McGuigan covering the history of the Australian wine industry and the effect that the Hunter PID has had over the past 25 years.

WaterNSW Flood Operations Training

WaterNSW conducted flood operations training in Cowra on Wednesday 24 Jul 24, and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend and observe the training.



It was interesting to watch them manually calculate inflows, releases required, and spill gate heights, using graphs and spreadsheets as redundancy should they have to do so in times of emergency where they may not have access to computers etc.



On the Thursday afterwards I participated in a famil tour around Wyangala infrastructure where we saw the various levels of redundancy for spillway operation, and

walk around the catwalk over the gates to better understand the mechanics of their operation. A thoroughly interesting 2 days and my thanks to WaterNSW for the opportunity.

CNSWJO Productive Water Policy Lab

Last week LVW Chair Tom Green and I participated in a Central NSW Joint Organisation water policy lab held at the CSU campus in Orange. Tom was a panelist for some of the discussions and also gave a presentation on the operation of the Lachlan Catchment.



While predominantly focused on town water, there was great opportunity for networking and providing insight on catchment management from an agricultural point of view, and how water users and townships work together in times of drought.

Restrictions Lifted for Back Creek Ground Water Users

As of 1 Jul 24, the department lifted the S324 Order restricting take on Zone 1 ground water. If water levels again get close to the agreed trigger reintroduction of restrictions may occur following community consultations. One of the requirements to extend the restrictions was a consensus from water users as to what the restriction level should be, and this was unable to be reached.

LVW AGM – Save the date

This year's LVW will be held in Cowra, and we're looking at Wednesday the 4th of September 2024. It will be peak "Canola Tourism" time for this area, so for those travelling and wishing to stay, get in early and book your accommodation. The meeting will follow the same format as previous years, with an AM kick-off, guest speakers, and lunch provided by LVW.

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