



# Lachlan Valley Water e-News

PO Box 819, Forbes 2871

June 2024

## River Operations

**Wyangala Dam.** 94% today with the translucent event at finishing a few days ago. Releases increased to 7,000 ML/day yesterday for the next few days. It's likely for releases to reduce back to 6,500 ML/day on Saturday to try and get to that 91% storage capacity as soon as possible. Inflows into the dam were around 3,000 ML from 8am Wednesday to 8 am Thursday on WaterInsights, and likely be to be falling to 2,500 ML today and so on as with usual recession. Rough rule of thumb is 1% storage capacity is 12,000 ML so at 6,500 ML/day release its about 0.5% reduction a day but then have the inflows to take into account, which are variable and harder to predict.

**Lake Cargelligo.** Sitting around 79% with roughly 430 ML daily inflow, but hard to measure what's going out due to gauge being back-water affected by high passing Lachlan River flows (maybe about 100 ML out but can't really say for sure).

**Lake Brewster** sitting at around 64% and nothing coming out at the moment from the storage.

There remains around 3,900 ML/day passing Willandra Weir which is going around and overtopping the Willandra Creek offtake so even though offtake setting at under 60 ML/day, high flows (up to 10% at the 3,000 ML/day range) will go around and over the top.

Booligal has around 1500 ML/day yesterday and the same likely for today. Then could go as high as 3,000 ML for 2 days and then 3,500 ML/d for day after that – but could also be lower. **Please note the river sections between Willandra Weir and Booligal are particularly complex and notoriously inaccurate in trying to correlate or predict based on previous events.** Forecasts tend to underestimate 'losses' so could be lower than the peaks forecast. Flows are likely to start coming back down from possible peak of 3,500 ML/d towards the middle of next week then vary between 2,200 ML/day to 3,000 ML/day for the next 10 to 14 days.

## Why Wasn't There a Spill & Reset?

Great question given that Wyangala hit 100.04% capacity a few weeks ago. When we followed up with department staff, we received the following response

*"...acknowledge that anticipation of an account reset is significant for water users and currently high. As indicated in the water sharing plan (Clause 45(3)), an account reset will only occur when all three storages are full or deemed to be full, and inflows cannot be regulated. At this time, Lake Brewster will be deemed full at 79.5%, as indicated in the recent water allocation statements. WNSW will advise the department when it sees a full system and will confer with the department about the practicalities of a timely announcement and reset of accounts. There will be no advanced warning.*

*In the meantime, routine monthly resource assessments will continue to provide updated information for all water users."*

**Watch this space while we consider our options to investigate further.**



**Wyangala Dam Releasing 6000ML Daily 15 Jun 24**

During an airspace reference panel meeting in June we also discovered that there was a limitation on the volume of water that could be released from Wyangala, due to volume restrictions on damaged structures at Brewster Weir that hadn't been repaired since the 2022 floods. The safety limitation provided only allowed for a maximum of 6000ML per day to go over the structures, whereas our opinion was that releases of 8000-12000ML/d should have been occurring to create airspace as quickly as possible for flood mitigation. This prompted a series of calls, emails, and letters from LVW to various councils and MP's, who in turn took the issue to the NSW Water Minister.

We've since been advised by WaterNSW that emergency preparedness for immediate works is underway, Short-term permanent repair of levy C has been accelerated and are planned for completion by September 2024, and that permanent works (remainder of flood damage repairs) – are planned for completion by August 2025.

There is a "Bye-Wash" at Brewster that is designed to release pressure from the weir levy which could be operating now to allow for larger releases from Wyangala. WaterNSW advised that they begin operating it if flows of 7000ML/d or more are forecast, but was unclear if they would lift flows or would wait until flows were uncontrolled above that before opening.

We have a meeting with MP Steph Cooke in Mid-July and will be sure this is on our agenda items for discussion.

Lets hope we don't have any big storms in the catchment in the next few weeks....

### 450GL Recovery Reports & Framework

DCCEEW-federal released its [What We Heard](#) report from the submissions to its draft 450 GL Recovery Framework released back in January.

The report noted many submissions questioned why another 450 GL is needed at all, but DCCEEW conveniently didn't hear those submissions pointing out more water will not fix the degradation drivers suppressing native fish, waterbird, and general ecological recovery.

The Department has this week also released the [Restoring Our Rivers: Framework for delivering the 450 GL](#) of additional environmental water and the [Restoring Our Rivers: Trading Strategy](#). I will provide more commentary on each in the next newsletter or as a separate update once I've had a chance to review each of them.

### First Nations Strategic Framework

DCCEEW-federal has released a [Strategic Purchasing Framework](#) to spend the \$100 million committed by the Australian Government on buying First Nations water entitlements. The detailed procurement plan is pending, but the goal is to target entitlements with high historic capital growth and returns.

A total of 47 gigalitres (GL) will be sought across NSW, Victoria, SA, and Queensland. Valley targets range from 0.5 GL in the Lower Darling to 8.5 GL in the Lachlan, 7.5 GL in the Murrumbidgee, and 7 GL in the Goulburn-Broken (Victoria). For a full list of valley targets, see pages 14-15 of [the report](#).

There is a risk that Indigenous purchases in 2024-25 may coincide with buybacks for the 450 GL target, adding pressure to the water market. These purchases might also coincide with efforts to recover more water in the Border Rivers, Namoi, and Barwon-Darling valleys, which fell short on Bridging the Gap buybacks earlier this year.

We're unsure why the Lachlan has been targeted with such a high purchasing target, however I suspect (hope..) that it's because we'll largely be left out of the 450 GL Buybacks, and have already met our recovery obligations under "Closing the Gap" purchases.

Research from [The Conversation](#) indicates a 17% decline in Indigenous water holdings in the Murray-Darling Basin over the last decade.

### LVW Forbes Office Closed

The Forbes office was closed this month, as our admin person Juliette, and I, predominantly work from home respectively and rent for the office had become an unnecessary expense. The PO Box and the landline numbers remain active, and we will use Council, accountants, and services club for any formal meetings with members required in Forbes.

### LLS/LVW Water Workshops - Save The Date

LVW in conjunction with LLS will be hosting water workshops in late July. Content and venue details will be provided at a later stage, however the workshops will be held in the following locations:

- 24 Jul 24 – Gooloogong
- 25 Jul 24 – Condobolin
- 26 Jul 24 – Hillston

### LVW AGM – Save the date

This years LVW will be held in Cowra, and we're looking at Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup> 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. There is potential for a farm/site tour in the afternoon this year, and we'll provide more detail when we have it.

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>