



Buyback Legislation Passes

The Government bulldozed the Water Amendments (Recovering Our Rivers) Bill 2023 through Parliament last week with only minor amendments that do little to protect Basin communities and nothing to fix the key degradation drivers still making our rivers sick.

The Bill passed the Senate 33-26 with Pocock, Van and the Jacqui Lambie Network siding with the Government trading off Basin communities and farmers in return for sugar hits on pet crusades.

The Bill returned to the House of Representatives where Labor gagged debate and rushed it through amidst much backslapping and grandstanding, oblivious at best and heartless at worst, at the damage and grief they have caused to regional communities and the agriculture sector.



The following is a summary of what occurred:

- The crossbenchers voted against keeping the 1500GL cap on buybacks.
- The definition of “additional Held Environmental Water” for the 450GL was broadened from only a water access right, to include delivery rights and irrigation rights. This only makes it consistent with the general HEW definition elsewhere in the Water Act. Arguably it may make more options eligible for calculating the 450GL, beyond just entitlement transfer.
- Senator Van amendment passed to map structure and reporting requirements, including considering socio economic conditions (this is not a socio-economic test)

- Senator Van amendment passed to include lease arrangements in the 450 GL. But it remains unclear whether this includes water leased from farmers vs the government buying entitlement and leasing back allocation to the farmer.

Other amendments that passed:

- Recognition to First Nations, in particular defining the 2026 Basin Plan review to match the MDBA principles already.
- Reporting requirements for flows in the upper Murrumbidgee (which is not actually covered in the Basin Plan itself).
- Audit of water recovery.
- All reasonable steps to acquire 450GL with annual progress reporting.
- SDL accounting to recognise the transitional arrangement for NSW’s non-accredited WRPs, so all Basin WRPs start with a reset to zero as of 2019, not when they are accredited.

DCCEW Online Seminar

DCCEW is hosting an online webinar to provide an update regarding the Restoring Our Rivers Bill at 11.30am, Tuesday 12 Dec 23. The webinar will run for 90mins, and to register your interest [Click Here](#).

River Operations

Wyangala Dam 93.9% full. Inflow contributions from the Abercrombie system are tapering off (now only 235 ML/day) and you can see the forecast on WaterInsights has it back to 50 ML/day by 10 Dec. It was the Lachlan River arm that contributed the most inflow peaking around 9,000 ML/day on 30 November, but has also tapering off now to less than 800 ML/day. There appears to be sufficient airspace and so don’t expect any airspace release management at Wyangala Dam from this last event – and also appear to have cut back releases from Wyangala due to the downstream tributaries, although increased slightly yesterday to about 450 ML/day from less than 100 ML/day from 1 December.

Belubula system - Supplementary flow access started 9am Tuesday 5th November 2023 and ceases at 9am Tuesday 12th December 2023 reflecting that rainfall runoff event. Expect a peak of around 1,800 to 2,000

ML/day past Jemalong Weir reflecting the D/S Wyangala tribs and water already released for orders that is now potentially surplus to requirement.

Lake Cargelligo: around 68.7% full and noting the Lake Cargelligo embankment upgrade operational update and in the Lake News that the storage capacity would be limited in the short term to 75% and don't expect flows past Lake Cargelligo Weir to get much higher than 1,700 to 1,900 ML/day. Its likely LC will be managed between that 65 to 75% range, capturing the rainfall related flows gradually and rising slowly and then using that water for demand when it picks up again and coming down slowly so as not to impact on any future potential works program. PowerPoint Presentation (waternsw.com.au)

Lake Brewster: around 75.2% full and maximum capacity is still 79.5% due to flood damage, and inlet also appears to be restricted to that 630 ML/day range. There was around 35 mm of rain over Lake Brewster region as well. We can't predict at this stage if Lake Brewster will get to that 79.5%. There is a small excess going through LB conduit due to the inlet restriction and tribs but that is in the 60 to 100 ML/day range.

At this stage (but subject to change as always) – don't expect to see any major 'surplus' or high river flows past Willandra Weir-Booligal to Oxley region as most of the rainfall related surplus is likely to be captured in either Lake Cargelligo or Lake Brewster up to maximum intake rate and/or meet any demand or operational requirements.

Evaporation Rule Saga Continues...

We are still chasing up DPE regarding reviewing the evaporation rule and its application. Yesterday we sent sternly worded letters to both the Deputy Secretary of DPE, Amanda Jones, and WaterNSW COO Andrew George, and copying in the NSW Water Ministers Office, urging them to meet with us by the end of this week, and bedding down the correct rule no later than close of business next Thursday, 14 December. It's frustrating that we continue to be fobbed-off and the Department continues to change the goal posts regarding dates. If we don't have a favorable response in the next few days, it's likely we'll escalate through the media. Watch this space....

Lake Brewster Pelican Breeding

Pelican breeding is on again at Lake Brewster this year. Apparently Lake Brewster is the most reliable and largest inland pelican colony remaining in NSW, and is nationally significant. Last season (2022-23 in Lake Brewster saw 49,882 nests with very low mortality (~2.3%). The only other 2 inland pelican rookeries that year in whole MDB

was half that at Narran Lakes with 23,591 nests and Lowbidgee with 21,443 nests.



Drone imagery from 22 November 2023 is yet to be analysed, however 2 November imagery auto count had 8,352 adult birds in various stages of courtship and nesting behaviour. Worth noting, this is the ONLY active inland pelican breeding site in NSW this season. Lake Brewster also had over 22,000 nests in 2021-22 which was largest in the southern MDB.

NSW and the Commonwealth environmental water is being used to support this breeding event up until 31 December 2023 as per the original watering action proposal on the CEWO website: [Pelican management at Lake Brewster - DCCEEW](#). The need to continue with the active intervention measures is currently being reviewed given the recent rainfall and cancelled orders and resultant river flows and increases in storage levels.

80/20 Pricing Survey

We are still collecting data regarding our pricing survey to gauge interest in switching a pricing model from the current 60% of costs fixed/upfront, and 40% usage/variable to an 80% fixed, and 20% usage – the original email was sent out on Tuesday the 24th of October. If you'd like the email containing the background information again, please let me know by emailing me at eo@lvw.com.au. The survey remains open, however not for much longer - you can access the survey by [Clicking Here](#).

Non-Urban Metering Review

The New Year will see the fight on metering ramp up. NSW Irrigations Council submitted a comprehensive response to the Non-Urban Metering Review. LVW made a submission also, supporting NSWIC's response.

The report, [Addressing Metering Compliance Barriers](#) details the ongoing hurdles to compliance beyond the control of water users themselves. While navigating these obstacles has been a persistent challenge, it is pleasing to see the Government appears receptive to acting on these concerns.

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals were sent out in October, and we've been pleased with the responses to date. If you haven't already paid your membership subscriptions please do so. Please bear with us as we work to consolidate member spreadsheets and update information (including email addresses!). We aim to implement a working database in early 2024 which will bring efficiencies in managing and updating membership. Lachlan Valley Water Inc is funded purely through membership fees, which allow us to advocate on behalf of water users in the Lachlan Catchment area. If you would like to receive your membership renewal electronically, please email your contact details and WAL/Licence No. to admin@lvw.com.au

LVW Social Media

Hopefully you may have noticed an increase in our social media activity. If you're not following us, please do so! It's a month between newsletters so we'll use social media to post points of interest, non-urgent notices, and related workshops and activities.

Please visit our Facebook page, follow us, like and share posts, and encourage your network to follow us by [Clicking Here](#). We're trying to build our page followers to over 500 by this time next year!

Wishing You Well for The Festive Season

Where has the year gone?!?! If you're anything like me, you've been surprised to find how quickly December has come around. There's still plenty to do in the lead up before Christmas, however our next newsletter isn't out until the end of the month, so I'd like to take this opportunity to extend season's greetings to our members and industry friends. Please also send us your farming Christmas photos, and/or tag us on social media so we can share with the rest of the membership.

The office will be closed between Christmas and New Year, however I'm available to take calls during that time and will be checking emails.



It's been a busy few months since I joined LVW early in the second half of this year, and a significant learning curve. I'd like to thank the Executive Committee for their support and guidance, and also our members who continue to reach out with offers of support and introductions. I look forward to meeting more members in person next year.

From the Executive Committee, our star admin person Juliet, and myself, we wish you and your families all the best for a safe and happy festive season and look forward to continuing working with you next year.

Glenn Daley, Executive Officer



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

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