



Lachlan Valley Water e-News

PO Box 819, Forbes 2871

October 2024

River Operations Update

Wyangala Dam. 94.6% of capacity and inflows minimal (280 to 370 ML/d at the moment). Tributary contributions from Belubula also looking relatively minimal with around 100 ML/day at Helensholme. When reviewing gauge history, it looks like there was a ratings table change on 23 October for Helensholme Gauge at Belubula. The environmental fish flow target at downstream Jemalong is still in place until end of November aiming for 1200 to 1300 ML/d 'floor' at downstream Jemalong. Releases out of Wyangala around that 1300 to 1400 ML/day at moment to try and achieve that downstream Jemalong target as much as possible. Noting it is a challenging task for river operators given the number of variables involved.

Lake Cargelligo. Reached 99% and it is likely to stay at that or drop slightly to 98% with evaporation etc. Nearly 1000 ML/day over Lake Cargelligo Weir and minimal inflows into Lake Cargelligo itself given almost at FSL (75 ML/day going in yesterday and about 50 ML/day out).

Lake Brewster. Levels dropping and at 58.6% yesterday. Due to inlet flood repair works, only around 100 ML/day in and 50 ML/day out. The majority of downstream demand or flow is thus coming from Lake Brewster weir pool or Lachlan Rier via the conduit (about 750 to 800 ML/day conduit). Still targeting above 450 ML/day at Hillton Weir where possible. Brewster weir pool has been rising and looks like the shutters have progressively gone in the last week or two as part of testing the Levee C and other flood repair works recently completely. Weir pool level likely to fall back down again in line with standard operations once the testing phase completed.

There are no red alerts for algae in the Lachlan at the moment, however there are amber alerts for Lake Cargelligo Town Water Supply, Boatshed, and Outlet at Lake Creek.

Belubula Water Sharing Plan

WaterNSW have sent a letter this week to Belubula Water Users advising that the draft Water Sharing Plan for the Belubula will be released this month (at this stage is planned for 11 Nov 24), and inviting you to comment. The draft will be open for 40 days during which time you're invited to provide comment/make a submission. LVW will be working with Belubula water users to provide a consolidated submission on their behalf, however still encourage water users to make their own submissions and comments.



Belubula River Bridge in Carcoar NSW

There are no links provided that currently work to show the draft plan, however they will go live when the draft is released and I'll send a separate email to Belubula water users with details once its live. I believe there is a webinar planned for 27 Nov 24, and a face-to-face meeting with Department staff in Canowindra on 3 Dec 24. Once I have details of the meetings etc I will also forward.

IPART Issues Paper & WaterNSW Pricing Proposal

IPART has released its issues paper for the 2025-2030 Pricing Determination for regional and rural bulk water alongside WaterNSW's pricing proposal. To view the Issues Paper, [Click Here](#).

IPART has also released WaterNSW's Pricing Proposal for the period 1 Jul 25 – 30 June 30. To view the pricing proposal, [Click Here](#).

What WAMC has proposed:

- WAMC has proposed bills increase by between 2.5% and 28% a year.
- It proposed to cap increases in water management charges at either 2.5% (for customers on the minimum annual charge) or 15% for all other customers. It also proposed that the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and the Dumaresq–Barwon Border Rivers Commission (BRC) charges would increase to reflect full cost recovery.
- It has proposed changes to non-urban metering charges, new and increased charges for consent transactions, new prices for floodplain harvesting, and changes to prices for Murray–Darling Basin Authority and the Dumaresq–Barwon Border Rivers Commission water management services.
- WAMC has proposed the NSW Government pay a larger subsidy than it currently is to avoid price shocks. This is to maintain the proposed 2.5% and 15% caps on price increases and allow WAMC the revenue it proposes it needs to deliver its services.
- WAMC stated it consulted with its stakeholders over several stages in developing its proposal.
- It proposed a 98% increase in operating expenditure compared to that allowed in our previous pricing determination. WAMC stated that costs are primarily operational costs and that the drivers of this are an increased level of water management activities including the replacement of statutory water plans, digital improvements, addressing precious under-recovery and increasing the NSW Government’s share of costs (separate to any subsidy).
- It has also proposed a 125% increase in capital expenditure.
- WAMC has proposed a minor change to cost sharing arrangements, to slightly increase the NSW Government’s share of costs.



What WaterNSW has proposed for its rural water customers:

- WaterNSW has proposed bills increase by between 0% and 37% a year. Bill impacts would vary across rural valleys. Our [Information Paper](#) sets out all prices and bill impacts for each valley.
- It proposed that IPART implement a ‘revenue cap’ so prices would adjust each year depending on forecast demand to allow it to meet its annual revenue allowance. It also proposed to increase the fixed portion of some prices. It indicated there is customer support for both of these changes.
- WaterNSW developed 6 outcomes to guide its service delivery – relating to affordability, secure and reliable water, transparency, sustainable water and land management, customer and community access to data and information and customer experiences. It proposes to develop a scorecard to measure its progress.
- WaterNSW has proposed a 43% increase in operating expenditure, stating this is driven by a change in operating model, compliance with existing and new obligations, and inflation.
- It has proposed 21% more capital expenditure than in the current determination period. Key projects include Fishways Program (\$100.8 million), Cold Water Pollution Program (\$46.8 million), Oberon to Duckmaloi Pipeline Renewals (\$29.2 million) and digital technology (\$54.4 million).

We will be discussing this in detail with other valleys when we take part in the NSWIC AGM next week in Sydney and I'll endeavor to provide more detail specific to the Lachlan when we get back. Submissions on the issues paper are due in early December 2024.

I urge all water users to stay informed and participate in the upcoming public hearing on 14 November, as well as to submit your feedback. It is vital to remind IPART that customers should only pay what WaterNSW requires to efficiently deliver services to their property. For more information and to register for the hearing [Click Here](#).

From NSWIC

The Commonwealth Government is still hoping to persuade States to commit to a revised National Water Agreement (NWA) before it goes to the polls early next year.

NSWIC's position remains that regardless of any changes to draft NWA released for comment, the NSW Government cannot commit without first thoroughly consulting with State stakeholders (which the Commonwealth neglected to do) and releasing regulatory and resource impact statements.

The NWA will replace the 2004 National Water Initiative (NWI), the product of a decade of rigorous consultation between stakeholders, the Commonwealth, and the States. The NWI was broadly accepted and has provided a stable framework for water reform over the past 20 years.

The Federal Government in contrast has tried to rush through its NWA in less than 12 months with minimal stakeholder engagement and consultation and ignoring detailed recommendations in the Productivity Commission report on what a workable renewed NWI would look like. Hint: nothing like the 302 mostly aspirational principles DCCEEW-fed came up with in its draft NWA.

Risks associated with the draft NWA include:

1. weakening of the risk assignment framework
2. granting of personhood to rivers without a proper understanding of its legal implications
3. inappropriate application of climate modelling to justify the reduction of the consumptive pool and water allocations
4. weaponisation of the precautionary approach to override legitimate concerns on reforms
5. undefined connectivity references
6. unbalanced consultation processes - the Commonwealth using external powers under international declarations to assert more control over State water management.

LVW Membership Renewals

You should have received your membership renewals over the last few weeks, along with a link to update your membership details online. As part of our digital overhaul, we're updating our database, and this form is our best opportunity to make sure we have the right info. Even if you're not a member, please take the time to complete the information. It's going to be a lengthy process for us, but one that will reap benefits going forward. Why do we ask you complete the form if you're not a member? We try and track Water Access Licence (WAL) sales to ratify catchment entitlements and use the data for when we lobby. Thank you to those who have paid their membership subscriptions already. You can access the form to update your details by [Clicking Here](#).

Water Resources and Links (New section!)

[Water Allocations Dashboard](#)

[Lachlan Allocations](#)

[Lachlan Water Trades](#)

[WaterInsights – Lachlan Storages](#)

[Lachlan Region Water Sharing Plans](#)

[Lachlan River Catchment Map](#)

What else would be useful to include in this section?

Please send me your suggestions!

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