

CICL Member Update March 2022

Water Operations update - Please remember to keep track of when your water orders are due to finish. If you wish to extend your order this must be lodged in *Waterways* at least two hours before the finish time.

Please do not use the emergency stop unless it is a real emergency situation. Minimising the number of orders starting and stopping will assist Water Operations in providing consistent flows and levels in supply channels.

If you require assistance using *Waterways* please contact us on T: 02 6954 4003. After hours or in an emergency you can contact the on-call operator on M: 0427 544 269.

As the summer irrigation season draws to a close, members will be asked to provide their late season water requirements.

Please also update the crop types and areas for each farm to reflect current areas. The crop form is available on our website [here](#) or from reception, and the completed form can be submitted via email to enquiries@colyirr.com.au or in person at reception.

Member grown barley award winning - NSW based craft maltsters "Voyager Craft Malt" have been awarded the world's best Pale Ale Malt. This is the first time the Gold Award has been awarded to a maltster outside of the USA.

Voyager co-founder, Stu Whytcross, says the quality of the barley used is a major factor in malt quality, and to celebrate this achievement alongside their growers has been something quite special.

"Making great malt, starts with amazing barley. The Riverina has such a great climate for producing quality barley year in year out."

Another factor that makes this win fulfilling for Voyager is that the particular parcel of Schooner barley that took the title was grown on the regenerative farm of Chris and Samantha Greenwood in the small Riverina town of Coleambally.

NSW Department of Planning & Environment Allocation announcements

1/11/21

High Security	100%
General Security	100%
Groundwater (Lower Murrumbidgee)	100%

CICL announcement and offers

Member benefit	10%
Additional water offer	4%

Waterways

<http://www.colyirr.com.au>

T: 1300 850 105

WaterMart



The WaterMart temporary water trading platform is a secure, transparent, fast option for buying and selling annual allocation. The WaterMart platform can be accessed [here](#).

Inter-valley trade

Up-to-date information on the IVT is [here](#).

You can register for WaterNSW IVT alerts [here](#).

Casual usage charge - Customers are reminded the casual usage charge of \$17.84 per ML applies to any water use greater than 110 percent of delivery entitlements. The charge applies per farm, or if the farm is in a single farming unit (SFU), per SFU. Details of CICL's charges can be found [here](#). The casual usage charge (if applicable) will be included in your CICL June account.

Your number of delivery entitlements held is available in *Waterways*.

Water use intensity policy - Members are reminded that total farm water use (including on-farm bores) should not exceed 8ML/ha for the current season (2021/22) unless they have entered into Water Use Agreements with CICL. The total farm water use for next season (2022/23) will be advised to members before 31 May 2022.



Introducing George Payne - How long have you worked for CICL and what is your role?

I have worked at CICL as a casual during my university holidays since 2019 and started fulltime at the start of January. My role is Water Quality

Assurance Officer in Water Operations.

What were you doing before you joined CICL? - I was studying a Bachelor of Agriculture at the University of Melbourne.

What does your job entail? - I assist with water metering of the pumps in the area as well as new or changes to installations. I am also responsible for the sensors and some metering at the main offtake.

What's a common question you get from customers/members? - Some of the questions I get have to do with water metering with pumps and installation requirements.

What do you like to do when you are not working? - I love spending time down at the river skiing.

What is your favourite holiday destination? - [Cabo San Lucas Mexico](#).

Healthy Rivers grant - CICL welcomes the announcement on Tuesday 18 January of a \$150,000 grant from the Murray-Darling Basin Healthy Rivers Funding Program to fence 690ha of our Biodiversity Reserves.

Enclosing the Biodiversity Reserves with wildlife friendly fencing will prevent unwanted grazing and unauthorised access. The fencing will also prevent the grazing of seedlings that germinate from the direct seeding undertaken by Greening Australia. Fencing will also allow us to observe the effect of stock exclusion on vegetation complexity and condition, and compare it to other wetlands in our area that we deliver environmental water to but are exposed to livestock grazing pressure.



Eric Hutchinson retires – A milestone for Eric and CICL

Tuesday 25 January was Eric's last day at work for CICL, concluding 43 years of dedicated service to CICL and its predecessors.

Everyone respects Eric, his leadership, composure and competence.

Eric led the Water Operations Team through the implementation of Total Channel Control, which was a challenging time for CICL and its members. He also had an instrumental role helping CICL Water Operations navigate the "drought years".

In recent years Eric has worked with our Water Operations team to build their knowledge and skills so his insights into forecasting our water orders could be imparted to the team.

Drainage water - Members are advised that draining water contaminated with pesticides into the CICL drainage system is a breach of CICL's Rules.

This season penalties were imposed on members that breached the Rules and allowed drainage of water contaminated with Metolachlor into CICL's drainage system.

If you have accidentally released contaminated water into the drainage system you must contact either Mark Robb on M: 0427 544 361 or Keith Thompson on M: 0439 084 569.

Spray Drift - Members should remain vigilant to protect crops from the harmful effects of spray drift. One of our managed Biodiversity Reserves experienced damage to vegetation from spray drift this season. Spray drift is caused by the improper application of pesticides and costs farmers across the Murray-Darling Basin millions of dollars every year in crop losses, hefty fines and court cases. Do your bit to eliminate spray drift this season and follow the pesticide Safety Data Sheet application guides and the advice of your agronomist.

Maintenance planning – Planning is underway for our winter 2022 works program.

Draining and pump out of the 34 km of the Coly 9 system is planned to enable survey, full desilting and priority bank rebuilding.

The increasing requests for irrigation water, both later in the water year and an earlier start in winter, has CICAL thinking of changes to regulators to allow for faster drain out of the channel system. A few different modifications were trialled on regulators last year. If the changes allow faster drainage, CICAL will look to modify other regulators.

We also have planned zinc metal spray repair and sacrificial anode installation for corrosion reduction on the main canal regulators' steel radial gates. Sacrificial anodes are made of a zinc-magnesium alloy. They are electrically attached to submerged steel to reduce the rate of corrosion. Fitting sacrificial anodes is a similar electro-chemical process to galvanising steel so the steel lasts longer.

These activities are in addition to our routine winter works including: bridge inspections and preventative repairs; channel repairs; and outlet repairs, particularly where outlets have been undermined by yabbies.

COVID Safe - The management of CICAL continues to review its pandemic risk mitigation strategy considering State announcements. CICAL requires all staff and visitors to our premises to be fully vaccinated. Alternative arrangements can be made to ensure CICAL is still able to provide its services to customers who are not fully vaccinated.

The following courtesies continue to apply:

- Please make an appointment in advance of visiting our premises and only do so if absolutely necessary. We would prefer it if you deal with our staff by email, phone or video conferencing.
- If you do need to meet with staff, please practice social distancing, hand washing and sanitising.
- Do not meet with our staff if you are feeling ill.

External issues

NSW Department of Planning and Environment 22/23 outlook – The Department released its first, preliminary outlook statement on Tuesday 15 March and the next will be on Tuesday 19 April. The statement can be found [here](#). Key points to note are:

- The Department is assuming 30 percent carryover on general security and conveyance licences of 680,000ML.
- Indicative starting allocations for high security of 95 percent and 15 percent for general security.
- Full access to supplementary water licences.
- Any undelivered IVT balance to be carried into the new water year, currently 125GL which is equal to 6.6 percent general security allocation.
- If wet conditions persist, a situation similar to earlier this water year may arise where, due to full storages, allocations stall as there is no space available to capture new resource. Only when liabilities reduce through water usage, and that airspace is refilled, can allocations increase.
- Assuming median inflows the forecast 1 November general security allocation is 48 percent.

Floodplain Harvesting (FPH) and Rainfall Run-off Exemption Regulations – In February, the NSW Upper House again voted to “disallow” the regulations required for the NSW government to implement its flood plain harvesting policy effectively.

The Upper House also voted to “disallow” the rainfall run-off exemption which was intended to exempt irrigators across the state from needing to hold a licence and work approval when capturing rainfall run-off in their irrigation tail water systems. *This is standard best management practice for all irrigation farms.*

This exemption is needed by our members to ensure they comply with our Rules and that CICAL complies with its Water Supply and Water Use Work Approval.

The outcomes of disallowance are continuing uncertainty for irrigators and no requirement for metering of FPH volumes captured in storages in northern NSW. CICAL believes this situation is unacceptable and we continue to ask government, the opposition and the Shooters,

Fishers & Farmers to find an acceptable pathway forward for the package of regulations.

Political landscape – Water and politics are linked together. The South Australian election was held on 19 March and resulted in change of government with Labor having a convincing win.

The Federal election is expected between now and the end of May, the Victorian election in November, and the NSW election in March 2023.

We have been working with both NSWIC and National Irrigators' Council to inform their Federal election platforms including a focus on implementation of the Basin Plan without having to result in further buyback or reductions in the consumptive pool. We are also supporting additional funding for complementary measures and to move the thinking towards looking at environmental "outcomes" not just the "just add water" thinking which to date has dominated the Basin Plan.

The NSWIC Election Platform is [here](#). Heading the list are three issues important to CICAL.

1. Maximise the **SDL Adjustment Mechanism** supply projects by permitting new projects, extending timeframes if required, and recognising progress towards SDLAM implementation in the Basin Plan's 2024 reconciliation.
2. **No more direct or indirect water recovery** from farmers, or erosion of the reliability of water entitlements.
3. \$2 billion to implement **complementary measures packages** to improve river ecosystem health across the Basin, including funding to accelerate the Northern Basin Toolkit Projects.

Member for Murray – The Member for Murray, Helen Dalton, has resigned from the Shooters, Fishers & Farmers and will now represent Murray as an independent in the NSW parliament.

Water Market Reform – The Principal Advisor's December advice was released by the Water Minister in February 2022 and can be found [here](#).

To date the Principal Advisor has been focussed on working with the states. Basin states have agreed in principle for the Commonwealth legislation to establish a Basin-wide mandatory

water market intermediaries' (water brokers, water exchanges etc) code and also Commonwealth legislation to prohibit insider trading and market manipulation across the Murray-Darling Basin.

CICAL supports in principle these agreements but more detail is required including mechanism, potential cost and responsibility for ensuring compliance. The mandatory code for water market intermediaries is likely to capture WaterMart.

Conclusion – The seasonal conditions have been remarkable, with Murrumbidgee storages pre-releasing significant volumes resulting in "surplus" flows in the Murrumbidgee River for months. It is rewarding for CICAL to have many of our members having a large summer irrigation program and I hope all your hard work is rewarded at harvest time.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Eric Hutchinson's contribution to CICAL and our members. I thank Eric for his service and wish him and his family a long and enjoyable retirement.

CICAL also congratulates Voyager on their award and is proud of members Chris and Samantha Greenwood's success and contribution to the award-winning Pale Ale.

Assuming relaxed COVID restrictions continue, I look forward to CICAL once again hosting member meetings in 2022. Member meetings are an important opportunity for CICAL to update members on its priorities/activities and for CICAL to listen to members.

Clifford Ashby
CEO