

CICL Member Update March 2024



Outcome of the Special General Meeting – At the Special General Meeting on Tuesday 12 March members approved changes to CICL’s Rules. The changes approved allow members to re-establish active membership at any point during the financial year. Once active membership is established, members are entitled to all benefits of the Co-operative. The new [Rules](#) have now been registered. The relevant new rules are below.

Active members (Rule 9.2) a Member must:

- (a) own or lease a Landholding within the Co-operative’s Area of Operations capable of accepting delivery of water from the Co-operative’s infrastructure;
- (b) hold a minimum of 10 Delivery Entitlements attached to the Landholding and a minimum of 10 Shares;
- (c) use or trade, or undertake to use or trade in a manner acceptable to the Co-operative, a minimum of 10 Megalitres of Available Water from the Member’s Available Water Account each Year;
- (d) subject to **Rule 9.4**, pay, or undertake to pay in a manner acceptable to the Co-operative, on or before the due date the Contributions determined in accordance with **Rule 120**;
- (e) not be in breach of any provision of the relevant Water Supply Rules and relevant By-Laws; and
- (f) be an active member of the Mutual, unless the Mutual is wound up.

In addition, **Rule 9.4** a Member who does not satisfy the requirements of **Rule 9.2(d)** may establish or re-establish (as the case may be) that element of Active Membership by paying the relevant Contributions in full after the due date, in which case the Member will be taken to satisfy the requirements of **Rule 9.2(d)** on and from the date on which the relevant Contributions are paid

CICL thanks those members who attended and voted for this change, 22 eligible voting members attended and there were 10 proxies. The vote was unanimous.

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) Allocation announcements

1/2/2024

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

CICL announcement and offer

Member benefit	10%
Additional water offers	6%

Water allocation update – NSW – DCCEE released an outlook for the 2024/25 water year on Monday 15 March [here](#).

Key points from this preliminary outlook are:

- The carryover volume in the Murrumbidgee is expected to be 30 percent of general security entitlements.
- On 1 July full allocations for towns, domestic and stock access licence are expected.
- On 1 July full access to supplementary water subject to announced events will be available.
- Starting high security allocations of 95 percent.
- Conveyance water allocated in accordance with the water sharing plan rules.
- Starting allocations for general security of at least five percent.
- An Interstate 71V restriction limiting trade into the NSW Murray, Lower Darling and Murrumbidgee **may be placed** to protect NSW water users if there is a high risk of spill of storages.

Waterways

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

T: 1300 850 105

WaterMart - The WaterMart platform can be accessed [here](#).

Inter-valley trade (IVT)

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

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



Bruce Brown, retiring independent director

– At the end of March, Bruce Brown will conclude his 20-year term as an independent director of CICAL.

Bruce was also a director of CIMCL until its winding up. Bruce has brought to CICAL skills in agribusiness, finance and management. Bruce has been a champion of ensuring CICAL has a

strong brand and reputation. Bruce's companionship and wise counsel will be missed.

A message from Bruce Brown – *My directorships with CICAL (including the Mutual) have been one of the joys of my professional life, given the many positive achievements of CICAL.*

Investment in new infrastructure technologies with both member and government monies have led to the development of a world leading, gravity fed, irrigation operation. The benefit of these investments has translated into significantly reduced water losses, enabling the member benefit and other related water offers to members. In addition, CICAL has over the past decade or so, been able to maintain its fixed charges to members at a level well below the cumulative CPI increase whilst building a very significant investment fund to facilitate future irrigation infrastructure replacement.

Importantly, CICAL has been able to lift its brand and reputation over the past decade. CICAL's advice/commentary on water policy and related matters is much sort after across both the industry and political spectrums.

Another key factor in CICAL's achievements has been the positive and collegiate manner of CICAL Board decision making supported both by progressive chairmanship and professional staff. Also, of significance has been the collective support of Board decision making by CICAL members.

In concluding, I would like to thank the CICAL Chairs, Board members, staff and members for what has been a very enjoyable and stimulating experience and wish CICAL and all involved a very productive and positive future.

Bruce Brown, March 2024



Bruce Brown, CICAL staff, former directors and former CEO inspecting infrastructure upgrades.

WaterMart approval times – WaterMart customers are advised to allow time for annual transfer approvals when purchasing annual allocation on the WaterMart platform.

Water purchased on the platform is available in your farm water account after payment is received and the relevant annual transfer approved. This ranges from a few hours for internal CICAL purchases and generally less than three days for external purchases of annual allocation.

The approval process depends on the location of the seller and buyer. The WaterMart platform accepts registrations from Murrumbidgee Irrigation customers and Murrumbidgee Valley river pumpers in the same annual trade zone as CICAL. Once you have logged in to the WaterMart platform, orders will list the location of the buyer or seller as NSW Murrumbidgee (Irrigation), NSW Murrumbidgee River or NSW Coleambally.

If the water purchased is from the NSW Murrumbidgee or NSW Murrumbidgee River, there is an extra step in the approval process which means it takes more time for the water to be available in your farm water allocation account.

If you require further information, please contact Therese Chauncy via reception on T: 02 6954 4003.

Preliminary advice end of season closure of annual allocation trade – The trades closure date for surface water trades in the Murrumbidgee Valley is the end of June. The following dates are CICAL’s expected closing dates for WaterMart and allocation trades.

WaterMart closes at **12 noon on Friday 28 June 2024.**

Annual intravalley transfers to and from CICAL’s licence close at **12 noon Friday 28 June 2024.**

Annual internal transfers between CICAL farms – close at **12 noon Friday 28 June 2024.**

Single Farming Unit Accounting – close at **12 noon Friday 28 June 2024.**

Carryover into 2024/25 water season – The carryover provisions in the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated Water Source apply to CICAL water entitlements. This means that:

- A volume of up to 30 percent of general security water entitlements can be carried over from 2023/24 to 2024/25.
- Carryover is not available on high security or G class water entitlements.
- The maximum account limit on general security water entitlements in 2024/25 including carryover and the announced allocation is 100 percent.

Members with more than 30 percent available in their general security water allocation account, or water remaining in their high security water allocation account, should note the closing date for WaterMart, Single Farming Units and annual transfers of **12 noon Friday 28 June 2024.**



Introducing Graham White - How long have you worked for CICAL and what is your role?

I have worked with CICAL in the maintenance team for 27 years.

What were you doing before you joined CICAL? I was a farmer on

a grape farm on Citrus Drive.

What does your job entail? - Maintenance in region four which is mainly the Bundure region and looking after the West Coleambally Channel.

What’s a common question you get from customer’s/members and staff? I mainly get asked about the different things which have changed with CICAL in my 27 years and the reasons why they have changed.

What is the favourite part of your job? - Chatting with members.

What do you like to do when you are not working? I enjoy spending time with my grandkids, fishing or gardening.

What is your favourite band? Anything from the 70s.

Grant Latta Scholarship – Coleambally local Andrew White is the most recent recipient of our Grant Latta Scholarship. Andrew has commenced his first year of a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at the University of Melbourne. Andrew attended Coleambally Central School and his parents and grandparents previously farmed in Coleambally.



Julian Speed, CEO congratulating Andrew White.



Introducing Adam Davis
How long have you worked for CICAL and what is your role?

- I have worked at CICAL for just over three years in the Information Systems Officer role.

What were you doing before you joined CICAL?

- I worked in Local Government providing Information Technology (IT) support and Systems Administration.

What does your job entail? - My role is wide ranging from IT support to new Virtual Machine builds to server maintenance, endpoint security and technical documentation.

What's a common question you get from other staff? - Quite often it starts as a statement "I think I have broken it" and then ends with the question "can you please come and have a look."

What is the favourite part of your job? - The general variety of work that I am involved in and the impact it has on CICAL.

What do you like to do when you are not working? - I love to spend time with my wife and six children and learning the six different perspectives on life that each of my children provide. I also enjoy helping coach AFL at various levels.

What is your favourite quote? - *"Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."* —Winston Churchill.

Staff changes - In January, Shawn Iddles, a local to Coleambally commenced work in our Water Operations Team as a Channel Technician. CICAL welcomes Shawn to our business.

Water operations update - The end of the water supply season is approaching. We are planning to close the river offtake on **Friday 24 May 2024** to start the annual winter maintenance period.

Members will be asked for their late season water requirements closer to the date. In planning their late season irrigation needs members need to consider that the supply of orders is not guaranteed after the river offtake closure, with water deliveries continuing subject to availability at outlets.

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.

Contact Water Operations during business hours on T:02 6954 4003 or after Hours on M:0427 544 269 to report any supply or ordering issues.

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.

CICAL quality assurance of farm meters – To comply with our Metering Policy CICAL annually performs two rounds of tip tests on all operating FlumeGate™ (FG) outlets, the first round early in the season and the second round after the Christmas break. Adjustments are made on site to ensure the outlet is operating within our acceptable accuracy.

In addition, CICAL annually engages an independent contractor to validate 30 randomly selected FlumeGates™ (FG) outlets. This independent testing is part of our Metering Policy. The validation includes a test for metering accuracy by comparing the upstream water level and gate tip position (tip test) and checking the general condition of FG components.

Damage to channel crossings – be responsible – Local farm machinery traffic continues to cause damage to channel crossings and approaches. The photograph below is an example. CICAL member funds are used to repair this damage at a starting cost of circa \$6,000 per guard rail. CICAL requests members, their employees and contractors to take more care, slow down and/or find alternative routes so this damage stops.



Environmental Compliance

Community Environmental and Reference Committee (CERC) nominations - The future of the CERC was discussed at the member meetings held on 13 February. You would have received a notice calling for nominations last week. Nominations are being sought for each of the five regions (Coly, Argoon, Boona, Yamma and West Coleambally Channel) along with one regional representative from Kerarbury Channel Pty Ltd. Provided a minimum of one valid nomination from each of the six regions is received by Wednesday 24 April 2024, the CERC will be re-established.

Please contact Therese Chauncy at ea@colyirr.com.au or on T: 02 6954 4003, if you have any questions or would like further information.

Water Use Policy - On the 19 December 2023 the CEO advised via email, a decision of the CICAL Board to suspend the "Rice Soil Suitability" provisions of the CICAL Water Use Policy. The remainder of the policy remains in force. The policy can be accessed [here](#).

Customers are advised that total farm water use (including on-farm bores) should not exceed 8ML/ha for the current season unless they have entered into Water Use Agreements with CICAL. These agreements allow for averaging water use between unconnected farms and exempting farms from water use limits for horticulture, permanent plantings, and other approved primary industries. Please contact Keith Thompson via reception on T: 02 6954 4003 for further information.

Drainage water - Customers are advised that draining water contaminated with pesticides, at a level above the EPA notification level, into the CICAL drainage system is a breach of CICAL's Rules. As part of routine compliance monitoring for our Environmental Protection Licence, CICAL staff regularly monitor the drainage network and sample water from drainage outlets. If you are unsure of the quality of on-farm water you wish to drain, customers may request on-farm water testing. If you have accidentally released contaminated water into the drainage system, please contact Keith Thompson on M: 0439 084 569.

External issues



National Irrigators' Council (NIC) CEO appointed

- In February 2024, Zara Lowein was appointed CEO of NIC. Zara was interim CEO of NIC from mid-2023, leading NIC through the negotiations and input into the Australian Government's Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Bill. She was previously the

Executive Officer and Secretary of the Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association for 13 years. Zara is a graduate of the Peter Cullen Trust program and through support by NIC, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Zara lives in North-West NSW where her husband's family are broadacre farmers.

CICAL is a member of NIC and looks to NIC to lead its advocacy on Commonwealth issues such as the Murray Darling Basin Plan. CICAL welcomes the

appointment of Zara as CEO of NIC. CICL has asked Zara to explore avenues to question the recent advertising campaign being funded by the Commonwealth Government to justify the recent changes to the Murray Darling Basin Plan. These advertisements have been on commercial television for several weeks.

Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) 2023 (the Act) Update –

Funding programs - The Commonwealth has completed its brief consultation on its draft framework to deliver on the 450GL (the additional environmental water). CICL's main feedback on the draft framework was the recovery of an additional 450GL from the consumptive pool is a significant threat to our community. The framework lacks detail on the volume to be recovered from which valleys and over what timeframe. Some of the options such as land and water packages and leasing may provide "win-win" outcomes but more time and catchment-based consultation is required.

The feedback from this consultation will contribute to the design and funding of the Commonwealth programs for the 450GL. There are three programs.

1. Resilient Rivers Program
 - Infrastructure – water savings, (irrigation networks, on-farm and non-farm and delivered through the States)
 - Water savings alternatives – land and water packages, Rules changes.
 - Possible IIO program delivered via the Commonwealth.
2. Voluntary Water Purchase (direct Commonwealth program)
 - Voluntary purchase (initially outside of IIOs)
 - Leaseback
3. Sustainable Communities (Delivered via the States).
 - Community adjustment (economic development funding linked to buybacks).

The Commonwealth is preparing an updated Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). CICL understands the Commonwealth purchasing under the 450GL program cannot start until this RIS is updated, the Minister is also required

before starting a water purchase program to explain how she has considered social and economic impacts.

CICL expects the water purchase program to start later in 2024 and the initial program will not include customers of group schemes such as CICL. (Please note this is CICL's assessment, the Commonwealth has not announced when the water purchase program for the 450GL will commence.)

Murrumbidgee optimisation – CICL and Murrumbidgee Irrigation continue to advocate for feasibility funding for the Murrumbidgee optimisation study, the most recent discussion with the Commonwealth and State is this project is likely to be a "supply" project. (i.e. a project that reduces the volume to be recovered from the consumptive pool). The Act allows for the states to propose new supply projects by June 2025. With the recent announcement by the NSW government, it intends to withdraw the Yanco Weir as a "supply" project and the significant rescoping of the Menindee Lakes "water savings" project it is imperative NSW has new supply projects.

Water trade records must be kept from 1 July 2024 – The Act requires irrigators completing annual allocation trades and permanent trades of both water entitlements or delivery entitlements to keep a record of this transaction for at least five years. This includes when the trade is between a related party.

The Act also requires all forms to be completed truthfully, this means where the form requires price and reason for trade information, the information provided must be accurate. The Inspector General Water Compliance and the ACCC will have new powers to ensure compliance with the Water Market Reforms in the Act.

NSW Alternatives to Buybacks Plan – The NSW Government says it does not support buyback and recently released its approach to minimising buyback in NSW [here](#). *"The NSW Alternatives to Buybacks Plan is designed to maximise water recovery and environmental outcomes through infrastructure, rule changes and other non-purchase projects including:*

- *projects under the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) which will contribute to returning 605 GL of water each year to the river system so that more remains for town supply, industry and agriculture*
- *recovery towards the 450 GL of additional environmental water."*

NSW Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water, (NSW DCCEEW) March 2024.

The release of this plan is welcome, however the "clock is ticking" for these alternatives to be progressed.

The NSW DCCEEW commissioned Aither to prepare a report that would help to inform NSW Government understanding of the socio and economic impacts of buybacks in Basin communities and how program design can mitigate or manage them. Aither was asked to:

- examine and identify which NSW communities (or regions) are most likely to be vulnerable to socio-economic impacts that would result from purchasing towards the 450 GL target
- analyse the extent of the impacts on those communities based on existing data and analysis
- explore elements of water purchase program design which would be most detrimental to the socio-economic welfare of affected communities identified, and
- recommend water purchase program design options that would minimise the socio-economic impact on communities identified.

The work was a desktop analysis and the overarching finding from Aither is that buyback program design will have a substantial influence over the relative socio-economic impact of water recovery to meet the 450 GL target. The report [here](#).

Aither's first recommendation is to focus purchasing on entitlements that would result in the least negative socio-economic impacts. Water purchase should avoid purchasing entitlements that have the highest relative socio-economic impact (based on their reliability and drought resilience characteristics). Aither also recommends some of the volume be recovered from the northern Murray-Darling Basin (MDB).

The report identifies for the Murrumbidgee valley purchasing Lowbidgee supplementary as having the least impact followed by Murrumbidgee supplementary.

Murrumbidgee Surface Water Resource Plan (WRP) accredited 29/2/2024 – This is the first NSW surface water plan to be accredited. The WRPs were to be in place by 1 July 2019. The first water year for sustainable diversion limit (SDL) compliance in the Murrumbidgee will be 2024/25. Changes arising from the Act mean compliance with the SDL will be assessed from 1 July 2019.

WaterInsights – WaterNSW's WaterInsights portal is a useful source of information about water availability, river operations and trade data, both annual allocation and entitlement data. The site can be accessed. This is a [link](#) to the regulated Murrumbidgee. WaterInsights contains details of current flow rates, and in the future, it will be the primary source of water information for water users and operators.

Conclusion – It is clear Bruce Brown has contributed greatly to CICL and is a champion of our achievements, I wish Bruce well in the future. The Board is close to selecting a new independent director to fill the casual vacancy created by Bruce's retirement. Members will be advised of the new director once the selection and appointment is complete.

The recent changes to our rules are a positive step allowing members to re-establish active membership within the financial year which the previous rules did not allow.

The photo of damage to road crossings is one example of infrastructure damage from agricultural machinery. It is important to slow down and take care to avoid this costly damage.

Please note the end of season dates for water allocation account management, WaterMart and annual trading and the preliminary advice of the closing date for our offtake.

I hope summer crop harvest is progressing well along with preparation for winter crops and pastures. Wishing all members a safe and Happy Easter.

Julian Speed, CEO