

## CICL Member Update October 2023

**CICL director election** – Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Limited (CICL) received two nominations for the member director vacancy. An election via postal ballot is being conducted with the ballot closing at 12 noon Tuesday 24 October.

The successful candidate will be announced at the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will commence their three-year term of office effective at the conclusion of the AGM.

Members are encouraged to participate in the director election.

**CICL AGM** – The twenty fourth AGM of members of CICL will be held at the Coleambally Community Club, 3 Falcon Road, Coleambally, on Thursday 26 October 2023 starting at **8:30 am**.

The 2023 AGM will provide members the opportunity to attend in person or to participate online. The Loghic Events platform will allow everyone to login from 8:00am.

If you require technical assistance to join or during the meeting, please contact Loghic Events Support Team on T: 1800 733 416.

All **Voting Members** will be pre-registered. Voting members will receive a confirmation email with a link to participate and vote at the AGM online. This confirmation email will be sent prior to the meeting date and will contain a unique link to login to the meetings.

To confirm your registered email address please contact Therese Chauncy T: 02 6954 4003.

**CICL Rules changes information session** – There will be an important member meeting to provide members with the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed Rules changes. This meeting will be on **Tuesday 17 October 2023** commencing at **9.000am** at the Community Club.

**Outgoing CEO** - The 2023 AGM is Clifford Ashby's last day of employment with CICL. Clifford will present to members in the general meeting and reflect on both 2022/23 and his time at CICL. Attending the AGM is an opportunity to wish Clifford and Robin well for their next steps and to thank Clifford for his contribution to CICL.

### NSW Department of Planning & Environment Allocation announcements

#### 3/10/2023

High Security	95%
General Security	46%
Groundwater (Lower Murrumbidgee)	100%

#### CICL announcement and offer

Member benefit	10%
Additional water offer	6%

#### 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 (IVT)

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

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

**Update your crop areas** - Before a water order can be placed, customers are required to complete a crop form with intended crop areas per farm. CICL is required to report annual crop areas as part of its licence requirements to government. They are also useful for:

- forecasting crop water demand seven days in advance for the river offtake order
- tracking water use intensity (ML/ha)
- identifying changes in crop types over time.

The crop form is available on our website [here](#) or from reception. The completed form can be submitted via email to [enquiries@colyirr.com.au](mailto:enquiries@colyirr.com.au) or in person at reception.

Once final crop areas are known please call to update your crop areas.

**“Member benefit” and the “Active membership” requirement** - CICL offered a **member benefit** of water allocation equivalent to 10 percent of delivery entitlements held, in July this year.

To be eligible to receive the member benefit, a member had to be **financial** as of 31 July 2023. This was explained in the offer document as follows, **“To be financial, a member must have paid their 2022/23 invoices, or entered into a payment arrangement to the satisfaction of the Co-operative, before 31 July 2023.”**

This offer was consistent with prior years. Regrettably, the take-up of the member benefit has decreased from 98 percent and 96 percent in 2021 and 2022, respectively, to 89 percent in 2023.

While still a high figure, management is concerned about the rise in the percentage of ineligible members. In response, we are committed to providing additional information to ensure that every eligible member avails themselves of this benefit.

It is important to note that the requirement to be **financial** remains unchanged. Some members may not be fully aware of the **payment arrangement** facility offered by CICL. This option has been available for several years, with a relatively low utilisation rate of 10-15 members annually. Payment agreements are accessible upon request and are subject to the approval of CICL. No reasonable requests are denied, and water allocation serves as security. Opting for this arrangement before the due date ensures continued eligibility for the member benefit.

CICL’s [Rules](#) define “Active Membership.” Rule 9.2 defines the requirements for active membership. The Rules also define how CICL can deal with any water efficiency savings from its conveyance licence.

It is the legal responsibility of directors and management to comply with the CICL’s rules.

Looking ahead, the **strict cut-off of 31 July** will continue to apply and will be enforced with no exceptions. Any appeals will be referred to the Board. Management will have no discretion in the matter.

To avoid bank processing delays, CICL recommends invoices for the preceding financial year are paid around 25 July.

Our objective is to award the full member benefit consistently and fairly to all eligible members each year.

CICL will also ensure it continues to provide information to members to assist their understanding of both member benefit and active membership and essential actions members need to take to be eligible to receive the member benefit.

Please contact Paul Clarke GM Finance if you wish to discuss this information on T: 02 6954 4003.

## Water Operations

**Avoiding restrictions** - In January 2023, a sudden increase in demand across the Murrumbidgee Valley caused a temporary supply shortage in the river. Within CICL, order demand also increased suddenly and as a result a two-day restriction event occurred.

In anticipation of another busy summer cropping season, you can help to minimise the chance of restrictions occurring by:

- placing accurate water orders
- placing orders 1-2 weeks in advance
- Optimising scheduling across multiple farms to reduce peak order demand
- Providing accurate crop area information

For information on how water is shared in the event of a restriction or constraint, please see the fact sheets [here](#) on Delivery Entitlement, Delivery Capacity and Capacity Sharing, and Steps for Managing a Restriction or Constraint.

**Misuse of emergency stop** - Emergency stop is a feature on CICL’s ordering platform, Waterways, allowing you to immediately stop an operating order. CICL use the Rubicon Total Channel Control system to automatically calculate and provide the required flows to keep the channel pools within range of a supply level. Use of the emergency stop feature can cause undesired issues with this control system.

The emergency stop feature is intended to be used in unforeseen circumstances (e.g., channel blow-out, pump breakdown), unfortunately it is being used frequently when an irrigation is

complete, or at the beginning of a rainfall event, which **are not** emergency situations.

We request customers please only make use of the emergency stop in a true emergency when you cannot wait the two-hour notice period to change an order on Waterways **AND** you are unable to contact Water Operations staff.

Water Operations contact details

- T: 02 6954 4003 – business hours only (8.30am to 5pm)
- M: 0427 544 269 – business hours and after hours (please note this phone **does not receive SMS text messages**).

Don't press STOP give us a call.



**Introducing Genna Rixon**

**How long have you worked for CICL and what is your role?** – I have worked for CICL for three months employed as an Administration Assistant.

**What were you doing before you joined CICL?** – I was working at Murrumbidgee Irrigation in the Customer Services Department.

**What does your job entail?** – I am working alongside Bronwyn and Therese processing temporary water transfers, customer water trade enquiries and applications and updating customer information. I have also started an administration role in asset management.

**What is a common question you get from customers?** – So far, the most frequent question I am asked is to explain HOU/Supplementary allocation access. Including how members can access the water while there is a supplementary event occurring.

**What is the favourite part of your job?** – I love the complexity of it, every day is a little different.

**What do you like to do when you are not working?** – I enjoy hanging out with my friends

**What is your favourite quote** – "*Vivamus moriendum est.*" Its Latin and difficult to

translate directly into English, but "Let us live, for we must die", is the common use.



**Introducing Ben Hoare, Mechanical Technician.**

**How long have you worked for CICL?** - I have worked for CICL for three months. My role is the Mechanical Technician, in Water Operations.

**What were you doing before you commenced with CICL?** - I was in a maintenance shed for an almond orchard, fixing a whole range of machinery, petrol and diesel engines, elevators etc.

**What does your job entail?** - I am responsible for repairing Flumegates™, fixing the gear boxes or wire drums mainly.

I have also been out in the field maintaining access to our Flumegates™, including replacing the bird spikes, where necessary.

**What is a common question you get from staff?** - Where did your work before, or what is your most recent work experience.

**What is the favourite part of your job?** – The hands-on mechanical role.

**What do you like to do when you are not working?** - I love working with cars and motorbikes, included both mine and friends. I enjoy the satisfaction of getting an engine to go and problem solving.

**What is something you want to share about yourself?** – I am a massive fan of classic holdens, HQ, HZ, WB and VS.

## Assets and Maintenance

Members are reminded the first of October was the start of the Bush Fire Season. This means any burning off must have a fire permit. The permit is only for weekdays after 4pm. There is no burning off on weekends or Public Holidays. The permit rules include a requirement to notify your local Fire Control Centre and neighbours at least 24 hours in advance, the fire can be contained and controlled within the specified area, adequate fire breaks and no timber or logs to be lit up. The fire

must not be left unattended, appropriate firefighting equipment must be on hand and the fire must be fully out before leaving and any other conditions placed on the permit by the Permit Officer.

The permit to burn is suspended on a Total Fire Ban Day. Before lighting the fire ensure that it is not a Total Fire Ban Day and that the expected weather conditions will not change and make the fire unsafe.

It is important these requirements are adhered to because loss of control when burning off can have consequences for you and your neighbours.

Recently a member's burn off was unattended and spread to a CICAL channel bank and burnt a junction box and fence. Repairs are underway and the member responsible will be invoiced the cost.

## Environmental Compliance

**Updated CICAL Water Use Policy** – CICAL has updated its Water Use Intensity Policy. The revised policy applied from 1 July 2023 and can be accessed [here](#)

**Water use intensity policy** – 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. Customers must make an application in writing to CICAL for a Water Use Agreement and the Agreement must be finalised before the mid-December allocation announcement for the Agreement to apply for the current season. 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.

**Metolachlor** - Any customers who are intending to use the herbicide Metolachlor (found in products such as Dual Gold, Boxer Gold, Clincher Gold etc) on their property this season are reminded that they are required to register their details by contacting CICAL via reception at their earliest convenience and to include this information on your crop forms. This measure will assist CICAL staff in responding to any potential pollution incident in an appropriate and timely manner.

## External issues

**Water Amendment (Saving our Rivers) Bill 2023** – This Bill has been referred to a Senate Committee which will report back on Wednesday 8 November.

The Bill if unchanged will result in significant reductions in the volume of water in the consumptive pool, this is a major risk to CICAL and its members, which CICAL and the irrigation industry have been arguing against.

Tragically, the Bill will not deliver the improved environmental outcomes the Government is seeking because the additional volume of 450GL of "water" cannot be delivered effectively without relaxation of constraints. There are other options available to address river health issues. You can't "just add water" to fix invasive species such as carp, habitat degradation, barriers to fish passage, lack of fish screens on pumps, cold water pollution, etc.

Key issues with the Bill are:

- It does not have bi-partisan support, stepping away from bi-partisan agreement for the Basin Plan. Bi-partisan agreement has delivered a known business environment. This change exposes us to the "raw" politics of votes and uncertainty.
- It removes the social and economic neutrality protections, embedded in the Basin Plan when the additional 450GL, was added. "The rule is it can only happen through



*methods that have no downside, social or economic. So that's the rule.* Former ALP Federal Water Minister, Tony Burke, October 2012.

- It allows water to be purchased from the Water for the Environment Special Account, previously precluded.
- It introduces a new category of Held Water Entitlements and will result in constant reductions in the sustainable diversion limit.

CICL supports the extension of timeframes and the opportunity to bring forward new projects included in the Bill.

CICL is supporting the significant efforts of both National Irrigators' Council and NSWIC to highlight the problems with this Bill and the alternatives available for government if they chose to use them for finalising the Basin Plan.

This includes communicating with Senators who can change this Bill.

The next few weeks will be busy with the Productivity Commission releasing their draft report on their Review of Basin Plan Implementation (anticipated in late October but no date set). A Senate Committee hearing in Canberra and potentially a NFF led rally in Canberra, expressing farmers concerns with the government on a range of fronts.

CICL will provide an update to members at the AGM on the Restoring our Rivers Bill.

**Private Member's Bill** - Local member Helen Dalton MP Private Members Bill - Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 is before the Legislative Assembly. This Bill aims to prevent transfers to the Commonwealth or State unless there is evidence that transfer can demonstrate neutral or positive socio-economic impacts in the relevant area.

When this Bill will be put forward and voted in the Legislative Assembly is not known. The Legislative Assembly sits in the second and third week of October and in the first two weeks of November.

Helen Dalton MP also moved a public interest motion in the Legislative Assembly on 20 September 2023. This motion sought for the house to:

(1) Recognise that stripping 450 gigalitres of water from the consumptive pool will significantly

harm annual cropping and dairy in New South Wales.

(2) Notes that Federal Water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, has trampled on the State rights of New South Wales by tearing up the 2018 intergovernmental agreement on water buybacks.

(3) That the socio-economic neutrality test operating under this 2018 agreement protects New South Wales rural irrigation communities.

(4) Demands the Premier stand up to the Federal Government and protects our rural communities and New South Wales State rights.

The motion was defeated by 45 to 38.



### **Incoming CEO comments**

- I am excited to start as CEO, my first week with CICL has been a whirlwind of briefings as I

start to learn about the details of this important business, our members, and the complex external environment CICL and its members operate in.

I thank Clifford Ashby and the CICL management team for their warm welcome and the Board of directors for giving me this opportunity.

I arrived in Coleambally with my wife Katrina and two boys, Ernie and Eddie and thank CICL for welcoming us all to Coleambally.

I look forward to meeting members at the upcoming AGM on Thursday 26 October 2023.

### **Julian Speed CEO**