

CICL Member Update August 2019

Water Operations start of season – WaterNSW has advised maintenance work at Gogeldrie Weir is completed and filling of the weir pool has commenced. WaterNSW work at the Tombullen inlet structure and gauging station is progressing. CICL is keeping in contact with WaterNSW to ensure filling of our channels will not be delayed by this work. Given the current low water availability and outlook, CICL is looking at options for minimising operational losses. Currently we plan to commence water supply to members in approximately mid-August. If channel filling can be delayed our system operational losses will be reduced. However, this benefit needs to be balanced with members' demands for late winter irrigation.

For planning purposes, members with a requirement for early season water are requested to contact CICL to advise of their specific requirements. Please contact Water Operations via reception on T: 02 6954 4003.

In addition to providing early season requirements by telephone, members are requested to complete a crop form with intended crop areas per farm. Please complete this form based on current water availability and outlook. Crop areas can be updated as the season progresses (if required). Copies of this form are available from our website or can be accessed [here](#).

Early season requirements will be recorded manually and Waterways will not be available until channel filling is complete and the system is operational.

Members will be advised when Waterways is available for water ordering.

2018/19 Invoices – Customers are reminded that all invoices were due for payment by 31 July 2019. Failure to pay will result in the suspension of water supply unless payment arrangements have been made.

NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment Allocation announcements

1/8/19

High Security	95%
General Security	0%

CICL announcement and offers

Additional water	6%
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Waterways

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

P: 1300 850 105

Inter-valley trade

Trade into and out of the Murrumbidgee is open.

For up to date information on the IVT go to <https://www.watarnsw.com.au/customer-service/ordering-trading-and-pricing/trading/murrumbidgee>.

Additional water 2019/20 – The additional water offer of six percent was subject to payment on or before COB Wednesday 31 July of the 2018/19 invoices in total, or the member entering into a payment arrangement for the 2018/19 invoices with CICL on or before 31 July.

This additional water offer was made possible because of CICL's carryover of annual allocation.

CICL Board elections – Nominations are now open for one member director as a result of the retirement by rotation of Keith Burge. The call for nominations opened on Friday 12 July and closes at 12 noon on Tuesday 13 August. A postal ballot, if necessary, will close on Friday 13 September at 12 noon, with the ballot counted on Friday 13 September.

If you require further information please contact the Company Secretary via reception on T: 02 6954 4003.

Community Environmental Reference Committee (CERC) –

The following members have been appointed for a three year term to the CERC: Argoon – Catherine Hardy, Coly – Damian Mannes, and WCC – Nick Morona.

Water operations winter works 2019 -

Scheduled maintenance and servicing of channel control equipment is on target. Major works have included upgrading the driving gear and communications at the Tubbo Wells Regulator on the Main Canal. Rubicon Water also removed, repaired and reinstalled a large FlumeGate™ at Regulator Three on the Main Canal. We have also sent 17 FlumeGates™ to the Rubicon factory for service and repair/upgrade as part of Quality Assurance of our meter fleet.

Infrastructure winter works 2019 – CICL has completed work on a number of structures over the winter to maintain or improve our service. Works have included desilting, bridge maintenance and erosion control on the Main Canal.

CICL thanks members who have complied with the traffic control limits at our work sites, protecting the safety of our staff and contractors.

CICL notes some members continue to disregard the traffic control speed limits, which is extremely disappointing.

A looming challenge is the increasing incidence of roly poly, also known as salt wort or tumbleweed, in paddocks where there is no competition from crops or pasture. The mature plants blow into our channels and impede flow. Removing roly poly increases our maintenance costs and CICL encourages members to seek agronomic advice to control the seedling roly poly in cultivated areas before it matures.

CICL metering and the NSW Non-urban water metering standards - CICL's licenced works at the river offtake, two groundwater production bores and their respective meters are required to comply with the NSW Non-Urban Water Metering Policy, which came into effect in November 2018. Their compliance is monitored by the Natural Resource Access Regulator (NRAR). CICL, along with all southern inland works, have until 1st December 2021 to demonstrate compliance.

CICL have commissioned a contract to a Certified Practising Hydrographer to provide a "Certificate of Accuracy" for our offtake meter. The bore meters are owned and maintained by WaterNSW, with compliance currently their responsibility.

CICL is responsible for ensuring compliance for water taken from our channels. CICL has a rigorous approach to measurement accuracy and strives to ensure members' water use is measured to the accuracy set by the Australian Standard AS4747.

If you are concerned about what you consider inappropriate "take" from our channel system please report your concerns directly to CICL via reception on T: 02 6954 4003.

WaterMart - WaterMart is currently undergoing some back end upgrades, which are taking more time than expected. Once completed and WaterMart is available we shall advise members via text message and email. Thank you for your patience.

Whistle-blower - Members are advised CICL has recently finalised its whistle-blower policy. This policy protects *eligible* whistle-blowers. Members who believe in good faith and on reasonable grounds that any employee, director, member or contractor has breached general law, CICL's policy, or generally recognised principles of ethics, that member must report their concern to:

- the CEO, or if they feel that the CEO may be complicit in the breach, the Chairman of the Board; or
- the local Police responsible for the enforcement of the law in the area.

Staff changes - Sue Nand, our Finance Manager and Human Resources Officer, will leave CICL after nearly 20 years in early August. Sue will be joining her husband, Uma, in Bundaberg.

Jane McIntyre has been appointed as part-time Human Resources Officer and Work Health and Safety Coordinator.

Shane Taylor (previously a Channel Technician) has been appointed as Operations and Quality Assurance Officer, in preparation

for John Skinner completing his contract with CICAL at the end of August.



Sue Nand, Jane McIntyre, Shane Taylor and Avinash Gurram (left to right).

Avinash Gurram has commenced work as Civil Engineer. He will work in both Water Operations and Infrastructure Management. Avinash comes to Coleambally from India where he has several years experience as a Civil Engineer working primarily as a project manager on irrigation construction and solar infrastructure projects.

Unauthorised use of CICAL Assets and Infrastructure – Customers are reminded that unauthorised use of CICAL assets, including land, channels, drainage areas and the like, is prohibited. CICAL will be conducting an extensive compliance program during the 2019/20 season to ensure that all arrangements are fully compliant with state law and CICAL policy. If you have any concerns in this regard please contact Keith Thompson on M: 0439 084 569.

Climate change - Earlier in the year the CICAL Board of Directors commissioned a report to highlight the potential challenges and implications of climate change for Coleambally Irrigation and its members. In the short-term the changing climate in the Coleambally Irrigation Area will not diverge significantly from the past range of conditions experienced, however, as we near the end of the 21st century we are expecting a noticeable shift in the climate.

In the **Coleambally Irrigation Area** climate change is expected to manifest in the following:

- by 2030 maximum **temperatures** are expected to rise by 0.7°C above 2005 levels, reaching 2°C above 2005 levels by 2070.
- **rainfall** is expected to increase slightly in summer and autumn, with a slight decrease in winter rainfall. Average annual rainfall will remain at current levels to 2030, with a slight increase in rainfall by 2070. Rainfall is expected to decline in the Murrumbidgee and Murray catchments by 2070.
- **extreme climatic events**, including periods of drought and high rainfall, are expected to occur more frequently, with increased severity and length.

The impact of climate change across the **Murray-Darling Basin** and South East Australia is likely to have a number of run-on effects, including:

- **a reduction in the Long Term Average Allocation of Water Entitlements**, caused by a reduction in runoff and streamflow in the Murray-Darling Basin. An increase in the inter-seasonal variability of annual water allocations is also likely.
- **reduced crop yields** caused by a higher rate of occurrence of damaging weather events.
- **government initiatives** seeking to address Australia's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement will offer opportunities to augment land management practices to conserve carbon.

The long term effects and implications of climate change may exacerbate stress already felt by our farmers. Longer droughts, more damaging storms and heatwaves and lower water allocation may impact farmers who are not prepared. It may reduce the financial viability of any farming enterprise that isn't set up to be highly resilient to seasonal and long term weather patterns. Please contact Keith Thompson on M: 0439 084 569 should you wish to discuss any aspects further.

External issues

Ministerial briefing – CICL has had two opportunities to brief the new NSW Water Minister, Melinda Pavey. One of these involved hosting the Minister and Deputy Premier to Coleambally. Our key messages for the Minister have been the importance of ensuring “no more productive” water is removed from the consumptive pool. This means NSW needs to achieve the volume anticipated from their “supply projects” or find alternatives and secondly, apply the “tough” social and economic test agreed in December 2018 at the Ministerial Council.

We also emphasised the benefits of our previous capital investment in improving our delivery efficiency and irrigation service.

Fixed charge fee relief – The NSW Government has announced as part of its drought relief it will waive its fixed charges on general security water entitlements for 2019/20. As far as CICL is aware the waiver will apply on the same terms as the 2018/19 fee waiver, where fixed charges on general security entitlements up to \$4,000 per farm business were waived. However, final details of the waiver are yet to be received from WaterNSW. CICL will pass on the benefit of the fixed charge fee waiver on in its 2019/20 invoices. (Please note CICL now has annual invoicing for Government fixed charges.)

Murrumbidgee Water Resource Plan (WRP) and revised Water Sharing Plan (WSP) –The revised draft WSP maintains the current account management rules i.e. 30 percent carryover and a maximum water allocation account of 100 percent. It also maintains the current conditions for allocation of water to CICL’s conveyance licence. CICL made a detailed submission on the draft WSP, correcting errors and recommending improvements in the performance measures particularly in relation to measuring yield and reliability and economic benefits. The process for developing the WRP and revised WSP has been disappointing with the perennial issue of alternatives to the Murrumbidgee WSP complex environmental rules, in particular the translucent flow rules, unable to be addressed.

Independent Social and Economic Panel -

This panel announced by Commonwealth Water Minister have commenced their work. Details of the panel can be accessed from their website <https://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au/>. The Panel will complete a preliminary report in December 2019 and a final report in April 2020. The Panel will finalise their terms of reference in consultation with Basin communities and has released their draft terms of reference for comment. At NSWIC we heard their Chairperson, Robbie Sefton, speak about their approach and work. Key points made were they will be fiercely independent of government, including the Murray Darling Basin Authority, and secondly, they **are not** reviewing the Basin Plan. The Panel will take a whole of community approach and will actively seek input from communities. The Panel see *this assessment as a critical opportunity to help shape the future of our Basin communities*. CICL will pursue opportunities to provide input to this work.

Rural Financial Counsellor Airlie Hoskins is the local counsellor for our area Airlie’s contact details are T: 02 6954 4179, M: 0429 396 729, E: ahoskins@rfcsnsw-sr.com.au (Monday –Thursday).

Conclusion – All eyes are looking to the weather to deliver an improved irrigation season in 2019/20. Unfortunately the outlook for 2019/20 remains sobering. To assist us make sound operational decisions I request members follow through with our request to provide us with both your immediate irrigation requirements (if any) and planned irrigation program. This will assist us conserve water, which will be important if there is no relief from the current drought.

I congratulate Sue Nand on her years of service to CICL and wish her well in Bundaberg. I am pleased we are able to provide Jane and Shane new employment opportunities and encourage all our members to welcome Avinash and his family to Coleambally.

Clifford Ashby, CEO