

CICL Member Update March 2019

Breakfast meeting Friday 29 March

Outlook for 2019/20 – We are pleased to advise that the Department of Primary Industry Water have accepted our invitation to provide an update to customers¹ on the outlook for 2019/20.

The meeting will be at the Coleambally Hall commencing at 8.00am with breakfast provided.

With continuing dry conditions this presentation is an important opportunity for an update on the 15 March allocation statement and the outlook for 2019/20. The presenters will be the Department of Industry key personnel responsible for preparation of the water allocation statements. This is an opportunity to hear first hand from the people involved.

Jenny McLeod, Policy & Communication Manager, will also give an update on the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

To assist with catering please reply to Therese Chauncy on T. 02 6954 4003 by Wednesday 27 March 2019.

Operations update - Planning has commenced for end of season water deliveries. Water operations is writing to all customers asking them to advise us of their actual late season water requirements by 31 March 2019. This request includes any requirements customers may have to deliver stock water.

If customers do not respond to this request for information, operations will assume that the farms owned by customers not responding will not require any further water this season. No demand may result in some channel sections being drained earlier, to allow for an early start to our winter works program.

It is important customers with ongoing irrigation or stock water requirements respond to our request for information.

If you have any questions please contact the Water Operations Department on M: 0427 544 269

¹ Customer is inclusive of members and non-members.

NSW Department of Industry Allocation announcements

15/3/19

High Security	95%
General Security	7%

The next allocation announcement is on Monday 1 April 2019.

CICL announcements and offers

Member benefit	10%
Additional offers	8%

Waterways

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

P: 1300 850 105

WaterMart

Open

Allocation trade

Internal and external trade open.

Inter-valley trade

Trade into the Murrumbidgee is closed.

For up to date information on the IVT go to

<https://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/ordering-trading-and-pricing/trading/murrumbidgee>.

Maintenance department contacts – CICL

has made some changes to the first point of contact for issues requiring attention from our Asset and Maintenance Department.

Please contact Bill Trengrove on M: 0429 785 221 for any questions in relation to:

- Infrastructure maintenance
- Plant or equipment hire
- Geofabric purchase
- Routine contractor questions.

Kevin Kelly is the contact for technical maintenance questions on M: 0428 544 272.

Customer's responsibility for prevention of the release of water into the drainage system

Customers are reminded they are responsible for ensuring they have suitable infrastructure to prevent the drainage of water from their farms. This is essential for minimising the risk of water contaminated with pesticides and or agricultural fertilisers entering our drainage system. CICL routinely tests drainage water as part of its Environment Protection Licence. Preventing discharge of contaminated water into the CICL drainage system is important to our reputation and the reputation of irrigators.

To improve CICL's and its members' capacity to prevent contaminated water entering our drainage system we are progressively refurbishing drainage inlets, with approximately 60 drainage inlets being upgraded annually. The drainage inlets are owned by CICL and funding for the refurbishment is from the levy paid annually to the Mutual.

Our priority for refurbishment and/or replacement is drainage inlets that are in disrepair and/or drainage inlets on farms with a history of metolachlor use and active irrigation programs. The new drainage inlets include a headwall with a control slide on the farm side.

Whilst this infrastructure is owned by CICL it is the customer's responsibility to ensure their farm management practices do not damage our infrastructure. If a customer damages CICL's infrastructure they are liable for the cost of the repairs. If you have any questions please contact Bernie Star on T: 02 6954 4003.

Kidman Way fibre optic – You may have noticed new survey pegs and tape along the Kidman Way. CICL has been advised that Transgrid have contracted VisionStream to install a fibre optic cable beside the Kidman Way from the Newell Hwy to the Transgrid substation at Ercildourne Road. The cable will mostly be ploughed into place using a bulldozer. Where there are CICL channels and drains they plan to underbore for the cable. **This work does not involve CICL.** VisionStream does not have access to nearby landholders contact details. If there are any

private underground assets, e.g. stock water pipe, please contact VisionStream Field Manager, Graeme Gartrell M: 0408 925 296 or E: graeme.gartrell@visionstream.com.au

External issues

Political pressure on the irrigation sector

Fish deaths, ongoing drought and campaigns against the cotton industry and irrigated agriculture have put water extraction and river management in the spotlight for **all** the wrong reasons.

The imminent State election and the Commonwealth election expose our sector to uncertainty and political point scoring.

CICL, through its membership of both National Irrigators' Council and NSW Irrigators' Council, supports their initiatives to present the facts, challenge the mistruths and advocate to protect our interests as irrigators. Both organisations are working towards how they best advocate for the whole industry.

Both organisations have websites and are active on social media. Below are links to their websites, where you can see what the two Councils have been doing.

National Irrigators' Council

<https://www.irrigators.org.au/>. You can join the NIC mailing list from this website.

NSWIC

<http://www.nswic.org.au/>

In recent weeks CICL has participated in forums with current and past politicians of different persuasions. One clear message from these people is that disunity and playing the blame game between irrigators undermines all irrigators in the long term.

Whilst calls to pause the Plan are popular, any pause will place us in a very uncertain place. Progressing the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment projects that provide 605GL of off sets is our priority.

These projects are complex and challenging and require governments to work with communities to develop solutions that deliver environmental outcomes that reduce the volume of water that has to be removed from

the productive pool at the same time as mitigating any third party impacts.

Keeping the cap on buy back at 1,500GL and keeping the Governments accountable to their own triggers which ensure that efficiency projects (infrastructure) satisfy the social and economic neutrality test are also high on our list of priorities.

Murrumbidgee Water Resource Plan –

CICL understands the draft Murrumbidgee Water Resource Plan and the draft Regulated and Unregulated Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plans will go on public exhibition in May 2019.

Rural Financial Counsellor – Customers are reminded the Rural Financial Counselling service is a free service funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments. For further information contact Graham Christie on M: 0438 444 540 or E: gchristie@rfcnsw-sr.com.au.

State Government fixed charge fee waiver – The administration arrangements between CICL and WaterNSW were resolved to our satisfaction at the end of February and we await their credit.

We are pleased, as a result of our persistence, our customers will receive the drought fee waiver on the same terms as if they were a river pumper. This means customers holding general security water entitlements will be eligible for a fee waiver of up to \$4,000 per farm account.

Due to the delay in resolving this matter to our satisfaction, CICL will issue a combined 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter invoice with the fee waiver applied at the end of June 2019, with payment due 30 days from the date of the invoice.

The Government's fee waiver will be shown on the invoice and automatically applied to the total due.

Cotton Australia social media training –

Cotton Australia's Digital Engagement Manager, Robert Virtue, is running a social media training workshop for cotton growers and industry representatives in Griffith on Tuesday 9 April, commencing at 11.30am at the Griffith Leagues Club. The workshop is expected to run for approximately two hours.

This will be a great opportunity for those customers involved in social media, or interested in being involved, to learn some news skills. For further information and to register please contact Honi Anderson on M: 0437 700 300 or E: honia@cotton.org.au.

Conclusion – It has certainly been a difficult year for agriculture in the Riverina. I am pleased we have been able to provide some further additional water to members. This announcement was made as early as the Board could responsibly allocate the additional water and is testament to the investments made previously in total channel control of our system.

It took us from August to the end of February to resolve the State Government's fixed charge fee waiver (drought assistance) to our satisfaction. The outcome was certainly worth pursuing, to ensure there was equity between river pumpers and irrigation corporation customers.

I encourage you to attend the breakfast on Friday 29 March to listen and ask questions of the Department of Industry – Water and Jenny McLeod.

Improving everyone's understanding of the water resource assessment process, the assumptions made and the differences depending on climatic conditions and water availability is important to your and CICL's businesses and I look forward to seeing members at this meeting.

Clifford Ashby
CEO