

## CICL Member Update October 2021



**CICL's Annual General Meeting (AGM) –** CICL will hold its AGM on Thursday 28 October commencing at 4pm at the Coleambally Community Club.

The Notice of Meeting has been posted to members. Business at the meeting will include: approval of the 2020 minutes, adoption of the 2021 financials, announcement of the results of the director election, and consideration of special business relating to directors' remuneration.

Members who are unable to attend the AGM are strongly encouraged to complete the proxy form included with the notice of meeting. Correctly completed proxies must be received by the Company Secretary by **noon Tuesday 26 October**.

The AGM will be followed by a General Meeting including a CEO presentation and an update on External Matters from the Policy and Communications Manager.

Refreshments will be provided at the conclusion of the meeting consistent with the Coleambally Community Club's COVID Safe Plan. The AGM will be run in accordance with the Coleambally Community Club's COVID Safe Plan which members attending will need to comply with at all times. Strict social distancing rules will apply.

Alternative arrangement will be made if changes to NSW government's requirements mean a face-to-face meeting cannot proceed.

**CICL Director nominations** – Peter Sheppard and Anthony Mannes were the only two nominations received for the two director positions. CICL thanks both Peter and Anthony for their on-going commitment to CICL.

**Does CICL have your correct contact details?** – CICL relies on being able to quickly contact its customers with important water supply information via both SMS and email.

If you have recently changed your contact details, including mobile numbers or email address, please make sure CICL has your correct contact details.

Your contact details can be updated by completing [Form 12 Customer Communication Form](#).

### **NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment Allocation announcements**

#### **1/10/21**

High Security	95%
General Security	52%
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

#### **Inter-valley trade**

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

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

**WaterMart** – The WaterMart platform can be accessed [here](#). If you would like to discuss how to register, please contact Therese Chauncy on T: 02 6954 4003 or E: [ea@colyirr.com.au](mailto:ea@colyirr.com.au)

**Annual water transfers** – CICL approves annual transfers during business hours. Customers are reminded to ensure annual transfers are completed in time to meet their planned water orders as CICL's systems do not allow water orders to be placed unless there is sufficient water in the account to satisfy the order.

**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 CICL. 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 CICL 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.

**Water Operations** – We are prepared for a high demand water year. We encourage all customers to keep abreast of their anticipated water demand and provide CICL with as much notice as possible for water orders. We also encourage customers to use Waterways to place their orders.

We anticipate the irrigation demand from row cropping will cause fluctuating water demands which may cause localised short supply pressure that will require rescheduling of orders or flow sharing to be implemented. Any member or customer affected by rescheduling will be contacted in advance.

To assist us with calculation of our advance order, once your summer crop areas are known, please update/correct the area and crop type for each farm by contacting Water Operations via Reception on T: 02 6954 4003 or after hours on M: 0427 544 269.

**Delivery capacity and capacity sharing** – Customers are encouraged to understand CICL’s approach to managing delivery restrictions and constraints and the differences between a delivery restriction and a constraint.

Key points to be aware of which should be used to assist your irrigation planning are:

- CICL’s modelled minimum service standard is 14/ML/day per 1,400 Delivery Entitlements (DE).
- A **capacity constraint** is where customers’ demand exceeds the design flow rate.
- A **restriction** is where daily orders exceed the flow rate available but not the design flow.
- CICL has tier one and tier two DE.
- Tier one DE has access to daily flow share when there is a capacity constraint. Tier two does not.
- In the event of a constraint the available flow is shared between active orders (per farm or per SFU) for tier one DE.
- In the event of a restriction the available flow is shared between active orders (per farm or per SFU) for tier one and tier two DE.

CICL has three fact sheets which explain delivery entitlements and our approach to managing restrictions. The fact sheets are on our website and can be found [here](#).

**Annual water allocation account limits** - The water account rules which customers need to be aware of are:

- Carryover plus the announced allocation net of annual trade cannot exceed 100 percent of general security water entitlements. (Carryover is limited to 30 percent of general security water entitlements.)
- History of Use (HOU) supplementary water use **up to** the volume of HOU held is **in addition** to the account limit of 100 percent.
- Supplementary water can be used if no HOU right is held but only by general security water entitlement holders. Customers who do not hold HOU supplementary water should be aware when deciding to use supplementary that supplementary water use is part of their 100 percent general security account limit.

**Staff changes** – CICL is disappointed to advise that Shane Taylor has resigned to relocate with his family to Port Macquarie. Shane’s wife, Kartia, has commenced in a teaching position at Port Macquarie. We thank Shane for his contribution to CICL and we wish him and his family well with their move to the coast.

Avinash Gurram has also resigned and commenced as a Project Manager at Murrumbidgee Irrigation. We are disappointed Avinash has left CICL but we hope he and his family enjoy their move to Griffith.

CICL has welcomed Chris McKersie and Brendan Mark as permanent staff. Chris joins the maintenance team as a Maintenance Officer and Brendan, following a period as a casual, has joined Water Operations as a Channel Technician.

In preparation for Eric Hutchinson’s retirement in early 2022, we are pleased to have engaged former Total Channel Control (TCC) Operator, Steve Edwards, who will commence with CICL in mid-November as TCC Supervisor.

Please make these new and returning staff welcome.

**Introducing Ali Simmons- How long have you worked for CICL?** I have worked at CICL for three and a half years.



**What is your role at CICL?** - Water Operations Engineer.

**What does your job entail?** - Mainly looking after the water accounting for customers and CICL as a whole. I also design and project manage

construction of any new hydraulic structures. I also help out the TCC Operators in the office and some weekends on call.

**What's a common question you get from customers?** - "I've forgotten my Waterways password; can you tell me what it is?" (Sorry, no I can't but I can reset it for you!)

**What do you like to do when you're not working?** - I love cooking, listening to country music and recently I've been learning Italian.

**Where did you live before coming to Coleambally?** - I grew up in Moruya, NSW and then went to university at ANU in Canberra.

**What is your favourite takeaway meal in Coleambally?** - Salt and pepper chicken from House Kitchen at the Coly Club.

**Where would you like to travel to when borders re-open?** - Tasmania, and hopefully one day USA and Europe.

**Water invoices** – Customers recently received an invoice for government water entitlement and usage charges for the first quarter of 2021/22.

These invoices are for one quarter of the water entitlement charges and for any usage between 1 July and 30 September. These charges are at the same rate as the 2020/21 charges.

CICL has issued this invoice as higher charges, as determined by IPART, will apply to government charges from 1 October – 30 June.

Members who have participated in the additional water offer will soon receive an invoice for the volume purchased.

**Please note the due date for these invoices is 31 July 2022.**

**Introducing Cody Crouch - How long have you worked for CICL?** I have worked at CICL for three and a half years.



**What division do you work in at CICL?** - Water Operations.

**What does your job entail?** - I am the region four Channel Technician.

**What's a common question you get from customers?** - A common

question asked is "how does the technology in flumegates work."

**What do you like to do when you're not working?** - I enjoy camping, fishing and other outdoor activities.

**What is your favourite quote?** - "Hard work never killed anybody!"

**COVID Safe** - The management of CICL continues to review its pandemic risk mitigation strategy considering State announcements, including the NSW re-opening road map. In order to enter CICL's premises, you are required to be fully vaccinated. Our staff are entitled to ask you for proof of vaccination before allowing you to enter our premises. If you are fully vaccinated and enter our premises you are required to register through the NSW QR code system and you are required to wear a mask. The following measures continue to remain in effect:

- Many staff continue to work from home, however, they remain available to assist you by email, phone or video conferencing.
- 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.
- Visitors from Victoria (outside of the NSW/Victorian border region) and the ACT must complete travel declaration forms [NSW](#) and [ACT](#).

## Environmental compliance update

**Metolachlor** - Any customers who are intending to use the herbicide Metolachlor on their property this season are reminded that they are required to register their details by contacting CICL via reception at their earliest convenience. This measure will assist CICL staff in responding to any potential pollution incident in an appropriate and timely manner.

**Drainage water** - Customers are advised that draining water contaminated with pesticides, at a level above the EPA notification level, into the CICL drainage system is a breach of CICL's Rules. As part of routine compliance monitoring for our Environmental Protection Licence, CICL 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. Customers are advised that CICL has already detected pollutants (Diuron and Metolachlor) above notification level this season. If you have accidentally released contaminated water into the drainage system please contact either Mark Robb on M: 0427 544 361 or Keith Thompson on M: 0439 084 569.

**Aerial pesticide application** - There has been a further incident of off target/spray drift onto sensitive areas such as remnant native vegetation across the CIA. Customers and their contractors are reminded that such acts are illegal and could be construed as negligent by the EPA and consequently potential for prosecution.

## External issues

**Rainfall run-off regulation and licencing of Flood Plain Harvesting (FPH)** - The NSW Upper House Inquiry into flood plain harvesting is due to report to parliament at the end of November.

CICL thanks its members who participated in NSWIC's presentation to help demonstrate to the Committee the importance of the rainfall run-off exemption regulation being supported by parliament. This exemption removes the legal uncertainty for irrigation farmers across the Basin who are using "best management practices" to capture rainfall run-off in tail water drains, preventing this water which may be contaminated from entering water ways.

The debate over FPH has been divisive, with various assertions about its legality. Evidence provided by Bret Walker SC, advised the Committee that **FPH is legal**. He says:

*"The circumstances that have obtained for generations are, it turns out, circumstances under which the take of water through floodplain harvesting should be considered (not merely "could be considered") a legal activity."*

CICL supports the following principles applying to the licencing of FPH:

1. FPH activity must be included in a licencing and work approval (eligible works) framework like other forms of water take.
2. FPH volumes captured in farm storages must be metered and monitored.
3. Regulation through licencing, metering and rules in relevant Water Sharing Plans must ensure water take is consistent with long term extraction limits and also the Murray-Darling Basin Plan sustainable diversion limits. Specifically, irrigators should be able to take up to the legal limits which have been established or agreed to by the NSW government.
4. Legal frameworks should be clear and irrigators across the state must not be exposed to legal uncertainty when implementing 'best management practices' which involve capturing rainfall run-off from irrigation layouts in tailwater systems.
5. Water sharing rules should effectively provide for critical human needs and at risk and environmental or cultural needs and these rules should be informed by science and community consultation.

**IPART** - The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) released its final pricing determinations for both WaterNSW and the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation (WAMC) charges in September.

These determinations apply for four years. The WaterNSW charges increase by CPI each year over the next four years but the WAMC charges will increase by more than CPI.

CICL has updated its [Schedule of Charges](#) with the new charges. There are two key drivers of the charge increases: 1) IPART's determination that WaterNSW and WAMC's efficient costs have

increased since the last determination; and 2) IPART's continued use of the "impactor must pay" method of sharing costs between water users and government. This contrasts with the alternative of the "beneficiary must pay". CICL and NSWIC both argued strongly that a number of activities, particularly WAMC activities, are government policy and the government's share of these activities should be higher.

**Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) update** – The NSW Government is re-scoping two projects - the Menindee Lakes Re-configuration and the Yanco Offtake. Re-scoping effectively means re-working the projects with the aim of developing projects that are more acceptable to the local community. The outcome of this work will be a lower SDLAM volume. How much lower, or whether there is any off set at all, is not known.

The NSW Government has also re-badged the constraints relaxation projects which are now called [Reconnecting River Country Program](#). This means the government is **finally** going to start talking to landholders about constraints measures as part of a process that will deliver local community benefits.

The recent high flow events in the Murrumbidgee River are providing real time information and data about the extent of inundation of elevated river flows downstream of Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams.

CICL is participating in the Technical Advisory Panel established to progress the Yanco Modernisation Project. The project will involve continuing to use our escapes to provide regulated flows to the Yanco Creek system. Details of what this project is likely to mean in terms of impacts on water availability, SDLAM "off set" volumes, and likely costs are not yet available. This detailed information is essential and needs to be available to all Murrumbidgee water entitlement holders before government proceeds.

What is clear to everyone is there needs to be more time and flexibility in the delivery of the SDLAM. CICL is continuing to argue this case along with NSWIC and National Irrigators' Council and both Murrumbidgee and Murray Irrigation.

**WaterNSW Airspace Reference Panel** – CICL is participating in the WaterNSW airspace reference panel. This panel provides feedback to WaterNSW to assist with its operation of both Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams. Presentations are available on the [Water Insights Portal](#) in the news section.

WaterNSW is aiming to optimise the competing objectives of flood mitigation and maximising the volume available for allocations. There has been significant community pressure on WaterNSW operations in the face of an extremely wet Burrinjuck catchment and high storage levels.

Significant volumes have been pre-released from the storages which has resulted in supplementary access in the Murrumbidgee since the start of the water year.

WaterNSW continues to review its operations in response to catchment rainfall, inflows into storage and inflow from tributaries. To date WaterNSW has successfully avoided a dam spill, mitigated the impact of tributary inflows and managed releases to at or below the minor flood level, minimising the negative impacts of flooding.

One of the key challenges as the season has progressed is the target date for the commencement of irrigation demand. The target date for refilling of the storages as of 4 October is 1 November.

**Why don't we not have a 100 percent allocation?** – The total storage capacity in the Murrumbidgee is approximately 2,500 GL and the entitlements issued are 2,700 GL, i.e. more than the storage capacity. In addition, the 2,700 GL does not include the volume the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) must set aside for losses, planned e-water (including end of system flows) and water sharing plan provisional storage volumes.

For a number of years now DPIE's position is they will only allocate water they are confident will be available. **This means individuals need to decide the risk they wish to take on potential improvements in the announced allocation.**

Factors to consider are the account limit rules which restrict the volume available to general security to 100 percent made up of announced allocation and carryover. With average carryover of 22 percent there is the equivalent of 74 percent general security available across the Murrumbidgee.

In addition, for general security water users without supplementary water licences (or in our case history of use access), any supplementary water used is part of the 100 percent limit. For these licence holders without debit supplementary water use may convert to with debit use (therefore freeing up stored water to be allocated) in the coming weeks.

If you want to know more please find [here](#) a link to the DPIE update to National Irrigators' Council previously circulated.

**Metering** – Groundwater users are encouraged to commence the process of ensuring their meters comply with the NSW non-urban metering framework.

The deadline for compliance with the metering framework is 1 December 2022.

The NSW Government has announced it intends to make changes to the non-urban metering framework to exempt bores less than 200mm, used purely for domestic and stock water, from needing a meter. Further information is available from WaterNSW [here](#). This include the steps to follow to check your meter requirements.

While it is not necessary to install telemetry on groundwater, users who install telemetry will receive a \$975 rebate on their WaterNSW invoice.

**Lower Murrumbidgee Deep Groundwater source account rules** – DPIE has agreed to consider inclusion of a new account management rule in the Water Sharing Plan. This potential additional rule will limit extraction to 500 percent of water entitlements (net of any allocation trade) over five years.

The intention of this potential rule is to make compliance with the aquifer extraction limit to rest with the individual licence holder.

This option has been developed by both Murrumbidgee Groundwater Inc. and Lachlan Valley Water. Further consultation will occur on

this proposal and CICL encourages groundwater users to become involved in the coming months when the opportunity arises.

**Conclusion** – I am looking forward to the opportunity to meet members face-to-face at our AGM on Thursday October 28.

This will be the first opportunity in many months for directors, members and management to meet face-to-face and I sincerely hope COVID does not disrupt these plans.

We are anticipating a high water delivery year in 2021/22. Similarly, Murrumbidgee Irrigation has indicated their customers' water use intentions indicate a 54 percent increase on water use compared to last year.

High irrigation demand from both CICL and Murrumbidgee Irrigation will place pressure on both organisations to have accurate forward seven-day advance orders. This is the approximate travel time for water to reach our offtake after being released from Blowering and/or Burrinjuck Dams.

Whilst customers enjoy the benefits of two hours' notice for water orders, CICL orders its water seven days in advance. The consequences of our order being inaccurate are either restrictions for customers or higher river operational losses.

I encourage customers to ensure the crop areas provided to us are accurate and they can be updated by calling Water Operations. I also encourage customers to give CICL as much advance notice as possible of their irrigation demand, as this will assist us with the accuracy of our advance order.

**Clifford Ashby**  
CEO