



Newsletter

President - Bob Crawford

Our election at the AGM saw changes to the Board. I would like to sincerely thank Russell Ford and Sally Dye for their combined 40 years of service to YACTAC, their input will be missed. Trevor Clark, Katie Gordon and Tom Holt are warmly welcomed.

I wanted to rejoice in the fantastic winter/spring rains the creek system has experienced rather than continue the sorry narrative around the SDLAM programs.

Sadly, I cannot, for I must inform you that it appears that all interested parties (except primary producers) – want to keep the MDBA’s Basin Plan 2012 in play for 4 more years. Keeping it in play, without reflecting what has happened so far, allows the ‘players’ freedom from embarking on adaptive management policies and proper evaluation of their models and policies until 2024.

More than sufficient water flow has been recovered from economic users and the people charged with distributing this gain are well on the way to stimulating the ‘environment’ to new heights.

There is a great opportunity for all parties to declare ‘completion’ and write it up!

The process now being undertaken in the YCS through the SDLAM projects should have been finished years ago.

The original model supporting the 2012 Basin Plan was sketchy. The model endeavours to integrate the Stream Flow Indicators (SFI) and flow parameters to water the iconic environmental sites. The model does not integrate with the efficiency measures that the YCS is involved in and it fails to notice the benefits of a reuse factor.

The YACTAC Board are doubling down on our understanding of the creek system needs (environmental, economic, social and cultural) and responsibility to supply IVT, dilution and dedicated environmental flows downstream.

The Board has chosen to express these needs and responsibilities through a holistic river inventory management model which I call the “glaximus” model. It is a mini sub-catchment form of the big one, which I am anticipating will eventually emerge within the Murray Darling Basin. Through this model we can demonstrate full usage of any operational surplus and thus demonstrate what the YCS can ‘save’ over and above the ‘model’ used by the ‘players’ in the 2012 Basin Plan.

A real circuit breaker would be a Federal Government with a will to put matters right! Surely, Australia is mature enough to investigate new ways to achieve a happy, healthy, and productive environment, rather than being welded to a flawed model.



I will close by wishing you all a happy and safe Christmas break.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President’s message	1
Murrumbidgee EWAG.....	2
CEWO	2
Wanganella SAG.....	2
Environmental Manager	2
Y-Spy.....	2
DPIE - EES	3
YCS Tours.....	3
SDLAM	3
NSWIC	3
Water Metering	3
IPART	3
WaterNSW	3
Executive Officer	4
Video	4
SDLAM Project Objectives	4

EMAIL OPTION

- Take advantage of the links to additional information.
- Please contact Tanya on **0408 833 801**

Murrumbidgee Environmental Water Advisory Group - EWAG

Wanganella Swamp

- 5GL has been used to water Wanganella Swamp, with another 2GL allocated.
- Watering commenced in September and will continue until the end of February.
- Water is being sent over Warriston Weir which is the first time since the floods of 2016.
- Last year 2,200ML was pumped into Wanganella Swamp through Boonoke. With more water available this year it was decided to run water down Forest Creek.

CEWO

Mid Wetlands - Old Coree

- CEWO allocated 1GL for wetlands.
- Pumped into the wetlands for the first time.
- Fantastic response from native vegetation and wildlife.
- Pumping will cease soon and the system will be allowed to dry out.

Lower Wetlands - Ryola

- Discussions have commenced with the landholder.
- Pumping is an option to water this important lower system wetland.
- Scheduled water for 2021 a distinct possibility.
- Platypus found in the lake next to the homestead.

Wanganella Stakeholder Advisory Group - LLS

- TSR pest control program.
- Clarifying objectives of watering program.
- Monitoring spread of current watering event.
- Monitoring birdlife and breeding event.
- YACTAC to undertake netting and vegetation assessment not being covered by agencies.

Environmental Manager - Dr Dale McNeil

It is great to see some rainfall, flow and green growth around the creek system. I have noticed a lot more native grasses around but also some novel grasses and weeds that farmers haven't seen before.

Platypus

The Platypus project is still awaiting samples to be processed in a Covid-slowed world, but partners are still interested in holding field days and community training/monitoring events soon.

Riparian revegetation

YACTAC is working with Murrumbidgee Landcare, Greening Australia and Local Land Services to develop projects that restore and enhance our riparian (riverside) vegetation communities. At present there are opportunities in the Upper Yanco Creek upstream of Morundah to secure funding for the improvement of superb parrot habitat.

If you are interested in restoring sections of your farm with native vegetation please contact me, especially if you are located between Narrandera and Morundah as funding is now available.

Habitat Restoration

Funding proposals have been submitted to fund a farm dams restoration project and a fish habitat restoration in the Colombo Creek. We should find out if we were successful or not during December for projects that start early next year.

We are trying hard to wrap up a riparian revegetation project at Yarrabee near Morundah that was funded by the Riverina LLS. Site preparation and direct seeding has been undertaken. I will be planting water plants and some trees on the creek bank over the next month, if anyone would like to come out and spend a nice day planting, please contact me.

Weed Control

YACTAC is funding another spring/summer weed program. If you have any areas of weed infestation on the creek or along the riparian area, please contact us so it can be investigated.

Y-Spy

Superb Parrot nesting

Have you seen superb parrots on your place? If so, its time they were nesting in small holes high up in redgums. If we can identify breeding areas in the YCS then there is a lot of funding available for revegetation projects. Identifying known nesting locations will help attract funding downstream into the Yanco Creek System, with the area between Narrandera and Morundah the current target for investment. If you are in

that area and interested in revegetation please let me know ASAP.

Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists have been helping us out with some active surveys to try to identify parrot nesting sites during November. Anyone interested in future bird surveys please let me know.

Dr Dale McNeil 0428 101 318



Male and Female Superb Parrots nesting

DPIE - EES Wanganella Watering

Wanganella Swamp and Old Coree have received significant inflows over the last few months which has provided the perfect conditions for bird breeding. Brolgas, swans and other water birds are breeding successfully and native wetland vegetation is responding nicely.

Phil Maher found a Baillon's crane nest at Wanganella Swamp recently.

YACTAC helped install two remote access cameras at Wanganella Swamp to track water levels, vegetation and wildlife responses.



The Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) has committed to keeping flows coming into Wanganella, finally delivering on the forgotten Forest Creek Management Plan. Murray LLS has re-engaged in the management of Wanganella Swamp creating a Stakeholder Advisory Group which comprises of landholders, YACTAC and other groups/government departments and chipping in with pest animal management at the site. A new Management Plan for the swamp is being developed.

YCS Tours

- Sir Angus Houston, Philip Glyde (Chair and CE of MDBA respectively), along with other government representatives met with YACTAC and undertook a quick tour of the YCS in September.
- The Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) has made several trips to get to know YCS wetlands.
- SDLAM YTAG members toured the Colombo system and current infrastructure locations.

These tours have been invaluable when discussing future planning for the system. There is nothing like getting out onto the ground and talking with landholders.

SDLAM

So far the progress to date has been in process rather than actual project options.

Finally we are starting to get our teeth into some decision making situations. The last few technical and community advisory meetings have been focusing on how to categorise and group the 2015 Business Case suggestions (and others) for the Modernisation Project (previously known as Effluent Creeks Project) before culling obvious duds. There were over 50 suggestions in the 2015 Business Case which was really just a WaterNSW infrastructure wish list. Early February should see an opportunity for the wider community to have their input into the project.

Last week the Technical group met in Albury to discuss the Yanco Offtake and WaterNSW presented background information which was enlightening. Dan Berry was the presenter and was involved back in 2015.

The position David Leslie left has finally been filled by Matt Kendall, who will be assisted by Matt Barden and David Clarke. It remains to be seen if Matt Kendall can fill the void that was left when David Leslie departed.

NSWIC

- The Board have decided to retain membership for this financial year.
- NSWIC will post out invoices directly to YACTAC members for their levy.

Water Metering

- WaterNSW will be responsible for metering compliance of publicly owned meters.
- WaterNSW will contact all landholders.
- To commence 2020 and be completed by 2022.

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/metering/government-owned-meter-transition-scheme>

IPART

- Discussions have commenced for the next pricing determination of the YCS Levy.
- The YCS levy value was discussed at the AGM.
- The timeframe is not finalised.

WaterNSW

- WaterNSW are pushing for the next pricing determination to be pushed back one or two years.
- Trevor Clark will be the alternative delegate on the WaterNSW CAG and ROSCO.
- Next meeting is later this week.

YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

<https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/yanco-creek-and-tributaries-advisory-council>

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Lower Section Committee:

Bob Crawford 0427 875 955
Trevor Clark 0429 691 010
Colin McCrabb 0428 847 558

Executive Officer

Tanya Thompson 0408 833 801

Environment Officer

Dale McNeil 0428 101 318

Please contact us to discuss any matter regarding the creek system, riparian areas or concerns you may have.

If you know of any change of ownership of property please send details to the Executive Officer, so our records can be kept up to date.

NOTE

- **New postal address**
- **New committee members**



Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

As another calendar year draws to a close many people will be glad to see the back end of 2020, for various valid reasons. At least it is a bumper season!

Dale and I have taken some time off recently, so this newsletter is a combined Spring/Summer edition.

YACTAC has a new postal location as I have moved premises. The physical location of YACTAC will be in Jerilderie but the mailing address will be in Howlong. Also there is no longer a landline telephone number, just mobiles. Everyone was using the mobile numbers listed, so it makes sense to have just one telephone number for each person.

The new board members have been inducted and are keen to get more involved with YACTAC.

The YACTAC membership invoices have been sent out with this newsletter. It was agreed at the AGM to increase the membership fee to reflect the extra activities being undertaken and to also acknowledge the importance of the creek to those who are living and working along its meandering corridors. The days where committee members shouldered the bulk of the work needed for YACTAC are long gone. Committee members are keen to guide all work undertaken but are not in a position to actually participate in the day to day functions of YACTAC. We hope with the good harvest it will encourage quick payment of the 2020/2021 membership fee.

Yanco, Billabong, Colombo and Forest Creek Video

A huge thank you to Helene Mortlock for coordinating and working on our first video about life along our magnificent creek corridors. It was shown to those on the MDBA tour and is on our website. Please take the time to have a viewing, it will take your breath away. You all should be so proud of your creek system.

SDLAM Project Objectives

- Keeping the Yanco, Colombo and Billabong creeks flowing.
- Enabling Community support for preferred options.
- Balanced social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes.
- Equivalent or improved environmental outcomes within the Yanco Creek System using less water.
- Equivalent or improved environmental outcomes within the Mid-Murrumbidgee River using less water.
- No unmitigated impacts to reliability of long-term water allocations for both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys.
- Value for money investment decisions.



Two photos of the Colombo Creek taken in Spring.