



Newsletter



President - Bob Crawford

I have been reading Dick Condon's 'Out of the West', to gather clues to the management policies used in the Murray Darling Basin Plan. There can be no doubt that the basin experiences 11 year cycles of drought and floods which are themselves contained within 50 year cycles which again are within 100 year cycles and so on.

Dick Condon stated aboriginal folklore 'was rooted in a timeless knowledge of dependence; dependence upon plants, animals, water and the seasons'.

European settlement contrived to inlay their culture and practices on this ancient and distinctly Australian Basin – '... a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of rugged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains ...' wrote Dorothea Mackellar.

The 10 year Basin Plan 2012 appears to ignore these cycles, principles and words.

Ignoring the dictums of climate change and Australia's climate viability may harm the basin more than ensure its long term health and the health of the rivers!

An SDL is nonsense in an Australian context of river management! It is a very European river management thing!

Regular watering of the outermost reaches of the floodplain from within, ignores the fact that these outermost reaches were watered often, from overland flows caused by the same rains that cause the in-river floods.

YACTAC has been asked about the Menindee Lakes SDLAM project. I am not clear whether the Menindee Lakes RAMSAR listing was the result of the engineered flooded lake regime (1960) or if it was from the original historical nature of the lakes – an ephemeral grassed and treed lake bed. It seems that this question should be addressed before the SDLAM is addressed!

Dale McNeil has left the YACTAC to further his options with the MDBA's monitoring team. I will miss the opportunity to debate the above mentioned concepts with him, but wish to take this opportunity to thank him for his service.

I was gratified to see so many members and community people attend the recent public meetings. It appears that the YCS was set up to fulfil the outcomes of the 2012 Basin Plan and you know what I think of this Plan.

The primary needs for Murray Darling river management – keeping rivers healthy by ensuring an adequate riparian + EWR for the environment and threatened species; maintaining a 'fit' supply of freshwater for SA residents, mining uses, cultural and economic purposes seem lost in the 2012 Basin Plan. Why are the new rules and regulations of the Lower Lakes and the Coorong excluded from a holistic river manager's purview?

So many hard questions that will be softened by a good autumn break!

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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

- 2.5GL Commonwealth water.
- 10GL NSW water.

Mid Wetlands - Old Corea

- 500ML Commonwealth water.
- 500ML Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group.

Lower Wetlands - Rhyola

- Watering will commence in April.
- Pumping from the Billabong Creek.

Weed Control

- Colombo Creek review is underway.
- Autumn spraying regime will commence soon.
- Focus on specific weeds like sagittaria.
- If you have an outbreak of riparian or aquatic weeds, please contact us.

NSW Farmers

- Looking into TSR assets and how to reduce weed growth etc.
- There may be funding opportunities to assist in managing the riparian areas of TSRs in our footprint.

Water Metering

- NRAR should be contacting you about water metering.
- Duly Qualified Persons (DQP) will be able to answer questions you may have.
- WaterNSW are responsible for upgrading publically owned water meters.

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

2021 set a frantic pace, so much has happened. Dale has been with YACTAC for two years and he has secured a full time position as Assistant Director of Monitoring with MDBA, we wish him success and fulfilment. As a consequence the board met in January to restructure part time positions, deciding upon two smaller positions. I then set about recruitment. It is with great pleasure that we welcome Russell Ford into the role of Water Flow Expert. Russell will be engaged whenever expert knowledge and water flow discussions are held and join the Yanco Technical Advisory Group for the SDLAM program. The second role is a 'hands on' project officer, who will work with landholders and the community, delivering funded projects throughout the system. We warmly welcome Andrea Mitchell onto the team.

Since our last newsletter I have represented YACTAC at more than 20 stakeholder meetings. These take up considerable time and energy but are essential to the continued development of the organisation.

It was great to see so many people at the recent meetings and to gain feedback from attendees. As many are aware 'bulk water' is a highly complex topic with competing requirements. YACTAC strives to walk the balance between those competing needs. Anyone that lives along or accesses the Yanco Creek System is passionate about the continued health of the system for benefits to both the people and the environment.

Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

It was a "baptism by water" learning about the Yanco Creek System at the five SDLAM community consultation meetings held across the YCS at the end of February. Spending the first night at 'Mooloomoon' in Moulamein, Bob Crawford organised a sunset cruise of the Edward River to the confluence of Billabong Creek - truly spectacular. The meetings gave me an appreciation for the creek system, community concerns and geography of YACTAC.

My background is in farming and natural resource management. I live on a property in Savernake, NSW and have spent the past three and a half years commuting to Stawell, Victoria working for Project Platypus (a network of 11 Landcare groups in the upper Wimmera). I have had other NRM roles based in southern NSW and particularly enjoyed working at the indigenous seed bank based in Berrigan.

I have the opportunity to work out of the Jerilderie LLS office and intend using the time to meet landholders and community members. I will notify everyone when a date/time is finalised.

I look forward to supporting and working with the YACTAC community, so if you have any ideas or projects please do not hesitate to call me on 0419 841 834.



Andrea Mitchell at Morgan's Lookout with the Billabong Creek in the distance.

Wetland Watering Boost

Wanganella Swamp

Collaboration between CEWO, DPIE-EES, WaterNSW and landholders has seen Wanganella Swamp inundated with approx. 12.5GL over the past few months. Water was delivered via Forest Creek in addition to pumping from the Billabong Creek. Monitoring has recorded a variety of frogs, broilgas, Australasian bitterns and ~300 straw-necked ibis. Dozens of waterbird species including royal spoonbills, white ibis and little pied cormorants continue breeding in the swamp. Water levels in Wanganella Swamp started to decline throughout February and March.

Old Coree

Pumping commenced to deliver 1GL of water to Middle Wetland for the first time, which has resulted in the condition of nitre goosefoot and black box canopy improving and tangled lignum flowering. Monitoring has also recorded a noticeable increase in birdlife including Eastern great egret, yellow-billed spoonbill, white-necked herons, pink-eared duck and Australasian shoveler. Water levels have continued to recede as expected and nardoo has started to appear across the northern sections.

Rhyola

Discussions are also occurring to deliver environmental water to Rhyola during April.

YACTAC would like to acknowledge the many people involved in these fantastic events and outcomes. The enthusiasm, dedication and time spent to achieve such events is not un-noticed and very much appreciated by the community and environment. Well Done!

YCS Levy

As discussed in the last newsletter IPART are reviewing bulk water charges for the next four years. **Yanco Creek System Levy** was set in 2005 at \$0.90/ML on Water Access Licences (WAL) and has remained unaltered. The proposal is to align the levy with inflation and for the next three years recover only lost inflation value:

- 2021/2022 \$0.90 per ML + 10% = .99 + CPI
- 2022/2023 2021/22 value + 10% of that value + CPI
- 2023/2024 2022/23 value + 10% of that value + CPI
- 2024/2025 2023/2024 + CPI only

A survey was emailed out to all levy payers and circulated at recent community meetings. An overwhelmingly positive response was received.

SDLAM

YACTAC has been involved in the SDLAM projects since first hearing about feasibility studies in 2014. It has been a long and winding road. The Commonwealth charged each state with the responsibility of developing the projects. We have witnessed changes of departmental names, structures and staff during the ensuing years. In November 2019 nominated community members attended the first advisory group meeting and there has been 11 meetings since. In addition to the community stakeholder group (YSAG), there is the Yanco Technical Advisory Group (YTAG). YTAG has held 9 meetings and numerous out of session meetings. YACTAC has been represented at ALL of these meetings. It is time consuming but essential as the outcome of SDLAM will determine the future of the Yanco Creek System.

We hope the community sessions held at Moulamein, Wanganella, Conargo, Jerilderie and Morundah gave you some insight into the SDLAM projects.

NSWIC

- NSWIC has been very active representing irrigators across NSW.
- NSWIC focus on policy and rules that impact all water users.
- NSWIC charge irrigators a levy to support their important work and it is essential their membership fees are remitted.
- Claire Miller has been tireless in her approach to all the impending issues.
- Take a look at their website to see how active they are. NSWIC is still the organisation that governments go to as an industry representative.
- Visit their website: www.nswic.org.au

WaterNSW meetings

- Customer Advisory Group—CAG
- River Operations Stakeholder Consultation Committee—ROSCo
- River Operations—Yanco

Murray LLS

- River Connections Grant recipient.
- Refreshing River Management: New partnership and stewardship pathways for improving river health
- More details next issue.

YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

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

**YANCO CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES
ADVISORY COUNCIL INC.**

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Upper Section Committee:

Tom Holt 0417 422 630
Lawrence Simpson 0448 189 001
Glen Baxter 0428 852 623

Mid Section Committee:

Sam Armytage 0427 534 622
Katie Gordon 0408 612 467
Geoff Ham 0427 942 336

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

Project Officer

Andrea Mitchell 0419 841 834

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**



IPART—Bulk Water Pricing 2021 onwards

Bulk water charge rates are reviewed and approved by IPART each four years. Your opportunity to ‘**have your say**’ on proposed water charges by WaterNSW, WAMC and other government agencies will commence on 16 March and remain open until 15 April.

WaterNSW charges in some instances are proposed to significantly increase. Current charges can be found on this link:

<https://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/ordering-trading-and-pricing/pricing/2020-21-water-pricing>

Proposed WaterNSW increases:

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
8% +CPI	12% +CPI	12% +CPI	12% +CPI

IPART website holds detailed information:

<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Water/Reviews/Rural-Water/WaterNSW-rural-bulk-water-prices-from-1-July-2021>

However the real threat is the recommendations of the Cost Share Review:

<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/website/shared-files/investigation-administrative-water-rural-water-cost-shares/legislative-requirements-water-rural-water-cost-shares/consultant-report-by-aither-rural-water-cost-sharing-review-january-2019.pdf>

Description of charge for WaterNSW and WAMC (W01-05)	Existing		Recommended	
	Govt %	User %	Govt %	User %
Scenario 1 of three scenarios				
Flood operations (capex and opex – c+o)	50	50	10-30	90-70
Water quality monitoring (c+o)	50	50	10-30	90-70
Dam safety compliance (c+o)	50	50	10-30	90-70
Dam safety compliance on pre 1997 (capex)	100	0	100	0
Environmental planning and protection	50	50	10-30	90-70
W01-01 surface water quality monitoring	30	70	0	100
W04-02 surface water monitoring	50	50	10-30	90-70
W05-02 blue green algae management	0	50	50-70	50-30
W05-03 environmental water management	100	0	10-30	90-70



L to R: Tanya, Matt Barden, Bob, Matt Kendall and Graeme Nalder at Mooloomoon showing off the area.