



# Newsletter

## President - Bob Crawford

The SDLAM Yanco Stakeholder Advisory Group (YSAG) has plotted a new course of actions under the auspices of the BETTER BIDGEE program. This program has been spawned from the MINCO directive to rescope the Yanco weir proposals. BETTER BIDGEE has five dimensions - Connectivity and First Nations involvement are two of these dimensions with community involvement, EWR's and so called 'water savings' (reclassification) being the other three.

It is proposed to fully connect (through a series of aquatic species passageways) the Murrumbidgee and the YCS to the Murray River. I have pushed for two interpretative scientific laboratories and education auditoriums attached to the Murrumbidgee River passageways preferably at the proposed Balranald weir site and the Yanco weir site.

To date, the YSAG has received no hydraulic, hydrological evidence nor environmental needs data to substantiate a rebuild of the assets at the Yanco weir site. Therefore, the BETTER BIDGEE program has been proposed.

The other SDLAM project, Modernisation, has been approved to proceed to the next stage of detailed scrutiny and benefit / cost analysis. This program draws heavily on the EWR's YACTAC has proposed, providing water for our iconic wetlands (Wanganella, Rhyola, Mundoora complex, and the upper Yanco complex), woodlands and instream / riparian assets. YSAG has even dusted off the proposal to review Lake Urana as an instream storage and ephemeral wetland option. Rebuilding Hartwood weir and a proposal to build a bigger more controllable storage at Wanganella and Caroonboon are being developed.

The connectivity component of the BETTER BIDGEE program may well be the game changer in the SDLAM saga.

Regardless of the exciting news outlined above I want to encourage you all to assess the extractive capacity of pumps (including domestic) you have employed and compare that with any works approval you have. NRAR are on the prowl!

Cheers and best wishes for a continuation of the beneficial rains.

## Annual General Meeting

Jerilderie or Conargo (tbc), 26 August from 1pm - light refreshments - all welcome.

Guest Speakers: WaterNSW, DPIE Environment, DPIE Water (tbc).

- TBC: Location and guest speakers dependent upon COVID restrictions



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### EMAIL OPTION

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

## Murray LLS

### Refreshing River Management

This is an exciting opportunity for YACTAC. For the first time in many years funding is available for a long term environmental project, usually projects are only for one or two years. YACTAC is committing to this project with funding and it will see increased activity on the creek and surrounding areas. Some major points are:

- 10 year funding
- Aiming to improve river health over a large scale
- River friendly farming practices
- Co-designed local river rehabilitation plans
- Leveraging emerging market drivers
- YACTAC one of three project partners
- Farm planning and coordination of on-ground works
- Aboriginal riverkeeper teams
- Connection to industry sustainability frameworks to build scale and legacy of outcome
- River health monitoring.

### EWAG - EES

A Murrumbidgee Valley environmental watering event will back up the current high flows being experienced in the YCS. Below focuses on just the YCS outcomes.

- A 'pulse' or 'fresh' within bank is scheduled for late July/August
- To improve health of wetlands
- Targeting areas that have not received water for many years, such as the lower Forest Creek
- Rhyola swamp to receive water
- CEWH, TLM and EES water allowances
- Yanco Offtake 1700—1900ML/day for 6–7 days
- Monitoring of the outcome of the event by CSU to be undertaken.

## Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

YACTAC has secured one of three key stakeholder positions in the Murray LLS River Restoration project. This 10 year project proposes to 'refresh and reinvigorate river management, driving social change that leads to improved health of inland rivers/ creeks sustained by industry, farmer and community action'.

SDLAM YTAG and YSAG meet each month in addition to workshops. We have successfully negotiated the removal of the 2015 Business Case 2.5 metre wall proposal at the Yanco Offtake and the regulator on the Yanco Creek. Whilst there may still be some construction works at the Yanco Offtake the major risk of a dry Yanco Creek System has been removed. Without the consistent efforts of YACTAC and others this outcome would never have been reached.

Discussions with the commonwealth and state water holders has highlighted the many wetland and healthy habitats within the YCS. From these discussions YACTAC has secured watering events and future monitoring of outcomes. Previously YACTAC has funded monitoring, so we warmly welcome future monitoring by CSU, which will be funded by government bodies.

## Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

### Platypus in the Yanco Creek System project

Dr Dale McNeil's report *Platypus in the Yanco Creek System – Understanding distribution and population status* has been published and can be found on the YACTAC website. A trifold brochure has also been printed as a summary of the platypus report and is available to all. YACTAC along with a grant from Murray LLS has funded the brochure and two platypus events.

### School education at St Joseph's Primary School Jerilderie

Samantha Davies from Petaurus Education Group Inc approached YACTAC to present to the school students sessions to enhance their learning about local natural environments and the Billabong Creek.

Gwen McLaughlin and I attended an education session in March on the Billabong Creek and talked about various aspects of the creek system, whilst the children wrote haikus with 'biodiversity' being their focus word.

On 15 June Andrea presented a hands-on, interactive session teaching the students about an endangered monotreme, the platypus. Students learnt about the characteristics of platypuses, their habitat and food sources. They also discovered that platypus is found in the Yanco and Colombo Creeks. Students investigated food sources of the platypus, by 'catching' macroinvertebrates and tadpoles in a bucket of creek water. Using a small net, students scooped up the water bugs, looked carefully at their characteristics and identified them using a water bug book. Students discussed dangers to platypuses such as rubber bands, hair bands, and milk bottle rings, all of which strangle the platypus. They also discovered that the illegal use of Opera house nets in creeks have caused platypuses to be killed in large numbers.



Andrea Mitchell with students from St Joseph's Jerilderie

## Platypus, farm dams and holistic farming

Two events were held at the Palladium Theatre and 'Tarrabah' in Morundah on the 16 & 17 June. Wet and stormy weather proved no deterrent for the 43 attendees. The evening began with a Welcome to Country by Wiradjuri Elder Michael Lyons who also played the didgeridoo to a dreamtime story. Amazing facts about platypus were learnt from Geoff Williams, Australian Platypus Conservancy, who also gave insight on key findings from YACTAC's platypus report. Dr Joanne Connolly, CSU, spoke about the platypus locally and what can be done to improve habitat.

From Kathie Le Busque, ANU Sustainable Farms, we learnt about enhancing farm dams for best environmental and agricultural outcomes.

The next morning, 23 participants had an early start in search of platypus on Michael and Anna Coughlan's property. No luck on the day but 'Tarrabah' provided wonderful creek habitat suitable for these iconic species. The big kids and little kids loved searching for the macroinvertebrates with Kathie Le Busque at her paddock lab. Back at the Morundah Pub Michael and Anna Coughlan spoke about the holistic farming practices they employ on their property.

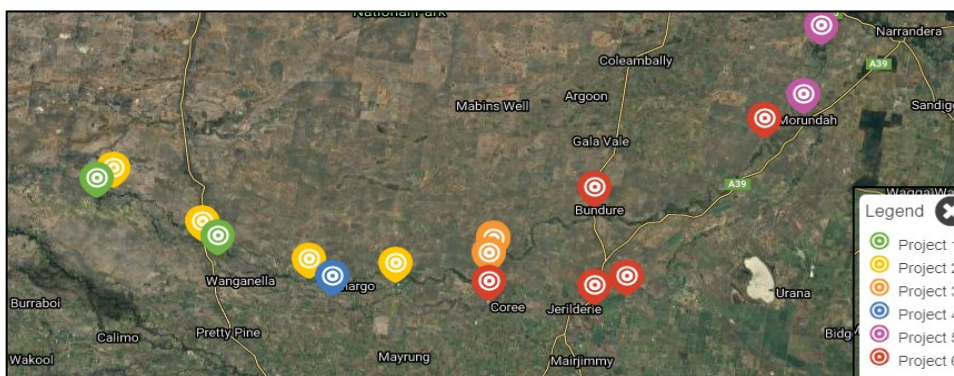
A big thank you to all the people and organisations who made the events possible including: co-organiser Kathy Tenison, Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc; Anna and Michael Coughlan, 'Tarrabah'; guest speakers - Kathie Le Busque, Joanne Connolly, Geoff Williams; Michael Lyons; grant funding - Riverina and Murray LLS; and landholders who took part in the larger platypus monitoring project.

## SDLAM

### Modernisation Project

Agreement has been made on the types of work to be progressed to the next stage, however this doesn't mean all the suggestions will be approved.

- 1 Environmental water delivery efficiency measures to Upper Yanco wetlands, Wanganella Swamp, Lower Forest anabranch environmental pumps
- 2 Re-regulation weirs at Hartwood Regulator, Piccaninny, Wanganella and Caroonboon regulator
- 3 Mundoora anabranch reconfiguration
- 4 Forest Creek return flows via Piccaninny Creek
- 5 Improved flow measurement at Washpen Creek and Cheverells Creek Offtake in addition to more gauging stations
- 6 Review irrigation escape flow rules



### Yanco Offtake Project

YACTAC is attending every meeting and out of session discussion, however there is no agreement on what is to be built as yet, modelling work is still being undertaken.

More information can be found on this link: <https://dpi.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/yanco>

### Sagittaria biocontrol

A successful funding application was made to the commonwealth to further develop innovative control solutions to improve the way weeds are managed. Agriculture Victoria (DJPR), and NSW DPI called for stakeholders to support on-ground delivery of biocontrol agents for sagittaria.

- Multi year project up to 30 June 2023
- Release of the fruit-feeding weevil
- Release sites include: creeks, billabongs, dams
- Sites will be monitored for establishment, spread and impact
- Integrate biological control with other weed management practices
- YACTAC one of two independent stakeholders.

### WaterNSW

Interactive technology and information is now available on the WaterNSW insights website with valley specific information including:

- Updates/notifications
- Allocation
- Storage
- Gauges
- Trading
- Losses
- Rules

### YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

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

**YANCO CREEK AND TRIBUTARIES  
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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

Price changes have been delayed until 1 October 2021. IPART is still to make a recommendation on WaterNSW charges for metering. Currently irrigators can 'have their say' by making a direct submission to IPART, which closes on 23 July.

		Charges					
		Charges to recover costs of implementing reform	Charges to recover costs of meter reading	Charges to recover operating and capital costs of meters			
<b>Users</b>	Privately owned meters with telemetry	Scheme management charge* \$74	Telemetry charge* \$226	No charges determined by IPART. However customers with privately owned meters will need to purchase and maintain a new or replacement meter. These costs will be borne by users.			
	Privately owned meters without telemetry		Non telemetry charge \$226				
	Government owned meters with telemetry	Scheme management charge* \$74	Telemetry charge* \$226			Meter service charge operating cost \$831	Meter service charge capital cost \$0
	Government owned meters without telemetry		Non telemetry charge \$226				
	Users that don't meet thresholds for metering reform	Scheme management charge* \$74	No additional charges (existing meter reading charges will continue to apply to these users that have meters or meter equivalents)				

\* As more users voluntarily opt-in to telemetry, the scheme management charge, telemetry charge and non-telemetry charge decrease.

To make a submission click on this link: [IPART - WaterNSW rural bulk water prices from 1 July 2021](#)

## Yarrabee

### Stream bank stabilisation and enhancement

'Yarrabee', near Morundah has been direct-seeded for a second time along the Woolshed creek line to complete the Stream Bank stabilisation project funded by Riverina LLS. Very few seedlings came up after last year's direct seeding. A small band of volunteers, along with manager Andrew Ritchie and staff planted 200 grasses and understorey plants on 17 June. Di Kelly from Coleambally Saltbush has completed the last of the direct-seeding along the fenced riparian areas. Fences that were installed a few years ago also received some repair work. It was a great opportunity to work together and also hear from the locals about their local platypus and fish knowledge.

A big thank you to all the people and organisations who made the event possible including: co-organiser Kathy Tenison, Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc; grant funding - Riverina LLS; 'Yarrabee' manager Andrew Ritchie, staff and volunteers.

