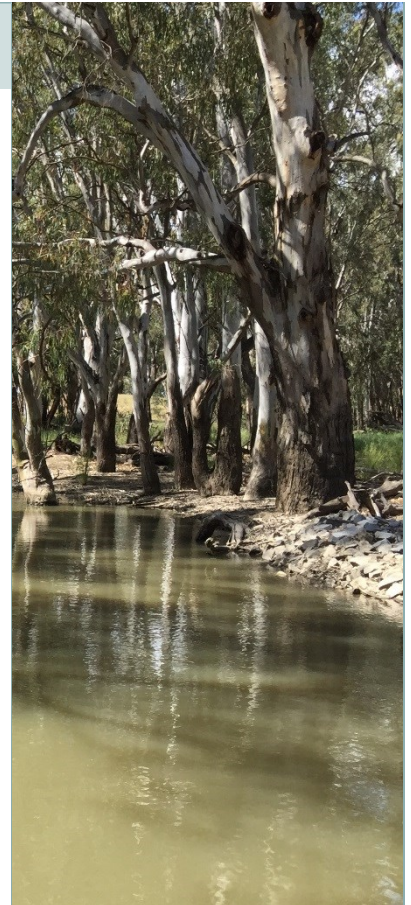




# Newsletter



## Outgoing President - Bob Crawford

The Yanco Creek System is in a better situation as its environment, social and cultural needs are now widely recognised by many government departments.

I have enjoyed the challenges and tribulations that the 2012BP has thrown up over my tenure. It has been a bitter/sweet experience as I cast my mind to envisage the fully developed system as imagined/planned by the Federal 2007 Water Act and its 2012 Plan.

YACTAC has been actively involved in many aspects of the 2012BP and also, lately, in planning for risks associated with climate change to inform the review of this plan. I am heartened by these developments but wish to remind you that the NSW Water Management Act 2000 says that water is allocated in a strict hierarchy: town supply; environment (as in water to keep rivers running), stock/domestic and then irrigators. Keeping these needs satisfied with an efficient delivery system may well be the main objective for future Boards of YACTAC.

I am heartened by the fact that the YCS community is now empowered to work towards a successful outcome for future generations. I will still be involved at an executive level and will continue to represent YACTAC at SDLAM meetings, but look forward to a reduced volunteer workload.

## Incoming President - Trevor Clark

Firstly I would like to thank Bob for the work he has put in, particularly on the SDLAM Project. Bob and Tanya have worked tirelessly to ensure the future operation of the creek system. I am sure Bob will continue to maintain pressure on agency officials to ensure the best outcome for the YCS.

Some of my background includes: long time irrigator, mostly in the MIL area; chair of Berrigan Irrigators Council; chair of Southern Riverina Irrigators. In the last 12 months I have spent many hours meeting with bureaucrats from the MDBA, CEWO and other water agencies. I feel it is important to work with agencies to have environmental and IVT water delivered through our creek system.

The main focus of YACTAC will continue to be Yanco SDLAM projects, including modernizing some weirs with fish passage, extra monitoring stations and looking at ways to improve environmental outcomes.

We will be also be trying to develop projects for the Murray Darling healthy rivers program, grants are available between \$100,000 and \$ 2,000,000, so anyone with an idea for a project please let us know.

I am looking forward to meeting with landholders along the creek system particularly in the upper Yanco in the near future, post Covid.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| President's messages .....     | 1 |
| Executive Officer's message .. | 2 |
| SDLAM .....                    | 2 |
| WaterNSW .....                 | 2 |
| Project Officer's update.....  | 3 |
| Sagittaria bio-control.....    | 3 |
| Monitoring .....               | 3 |
| NSWIC .....                    | 3 |
| Metering.....                  | 3 |
| YSAG .....                     | 3 |
| Wind in the Willows .....      | 4 |
| Refreshing River Health.....   | 4 |
| Platypus.....                  | 4 |
| Local stories.....             | 4 |

### EMAIL OPTION

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

## WaterNSW

### Monthly YCS Operating meetings

- No inflows from the irrigation escapes.
- Yanco Offtake dropping from weekly high of 2960ML.
- Unregulated inflows from Billabong Creek, Walbundrie 460ML.
- Rule trigger: When Hartwood Weir reaches above 1200ML/day in a natural flow condition, the gate at Forest Creek must be opened.

### Fortnightly Air Space meetings

- Blowering 100GL air space rule.
- Air space releases will stay within channel.
- WaterNSW is confident the dams will re-fill given the wet forecast by BoM.

### Pre-season Operating meetings

- Crop survey data shared.
- MI largest water user followed by eWater.
- Over ordering still an issue.
- Issue with eWater taken in the YCS - shepherding!
- Need to ensure water ordered not exceeded.
- Need to amend water order if less is going to be pumped.

### Customer Advisory Group meetings

- Yanco Offtake maintenance - bulk head has not yet been built.
- Suggested to under take maintenance of Yanco Offtake whilst gates are out of the water due to high flows.
- Kitchen Table will be the platform used for broader community consultation.
- Update on capital works for the next 20 years. Levels of Service.
- Regional Water Strategy - no opportunity for consultation in the valley.

## Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

At the general meeting directly after the AGM elections were held for executive positions. Bob Crawford had indicated previously that he would be stepping down from the position of president, and as such, Trevor Clark was elected unopposed. Bob is not stepping away completely as he offered to continue on the executive, as vice president. Glen Baxter will continue in his role as the second vice president. Geoff Ham had been carrying the multipurpose role of secretary/treasurer and public officer and we are pleased that Colin McCrabb has offered to take on the role of secretary, with Geoff continuing in the roles of treasurer and public officer. Lawrence Simpson will continue as environmental representative. I encourage you to thank these people when you see them, as YACTAC can't exist without willing board members to take on an executive position.

YACTAC has been represented at many meetings and your views/needs are always presented in a professional manner. Most recently WaterNSW has increased participation with extra groups discussing the management of dams and air space, on a fortnightly basis. As the chair of WaterNSW Murrumbidgee CAG I am able to bring important agenda items to the fore, so contact me if you feel something should be discussed.

Metering conversations are continuing with a push to make the transition to the new compliance rules as smooth as possible. WaterNSW has indicated they are willing to assist and I have put a number of members in contact with the relevant people.

With new funding being received Andrea's hours will increase from 1 October to four days per week. So please contact Andrea if you would like to discuss on ground activities on your property or in your area.

## SDLAM—Modernisation, Offtake and Constraints

The SDLAM train continues on the track towards 2024. There were online community engagement sessions during September and it was evident, with the poor turn out, that online is not a good way of reaching people. Hopefully face to face meetings can occur before the next scheduled community sessions in February 2022.

**Modernisation** is the project dealing with changes in the Yanco, Colombo, Forest and Billabong creeks. Much has been made of fast tracking the works but little specific data has been shared. What we do know is that Hartwood Weir and Wanganella Weir will be replaced. As you will be aware the rebuilding of Hartwood Weir has been under discussion for more than 20 years, so at last something will happen there.

Detailed information can be found on this link:

[Social Pinpoint | Yanco \(mysocialpinpoint.com.au\)](https://mysocialpinpoint.com.au)

**Yanco Offtake/Regulator** has been rebadged as the **Yanco Creek Connection Project** but it is still an unknown. Minister Pavey has said it is to be re-scoped, along with Menindee. However that was on 29 April with a two month timeframe, and we are now nearly five months down the track and still no information. We are pressing hard to get information but the latest is that we have to wait until after the next MINCo in November.

[Yanco Creek Offtake Project - Water in New South Wales \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://nsw.gov.au)

**Constraints** has been rebadged as the Reconnecting River Country project. We met with Tracey MacDonald recently and presented a YACTAC discussion paper on the topic. To her credit Tracey acknowledged our concerns and offered YACTAC a seat at the table to work with the department to achieve a win/win outcome, similar to the outcomes achieved for the Modernisation project. It is early days and we will need to decide how we engage with this project.

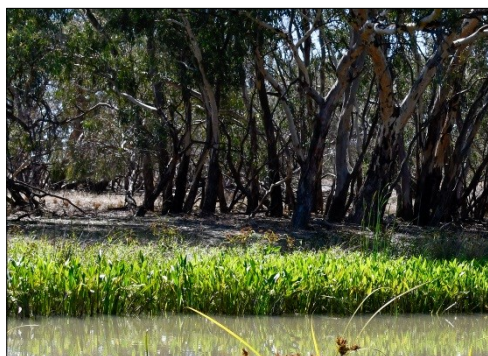
## Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

Even with lockdowns hampering everyday life YACTAC is beavering away in the background, working through projects and securing funding.

### Realising the fruits of our labour - biological control of *Sagittaria* 2021- 2023

YACTAC joined with Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) to support biological control of the declared Weed of National Significance - *Sagittaria platyphylla*. *Sagittaria*, an aquatic fast growing weed causes irrigation channels to block, hampers water flow, and obstructs wetlands and natural watercourses. The biological control is *Listronotus appendiculatus*, a fruit-feeding weevil, currently being reared in AgriBio facilities in Victoria and NSW. We are currently looking for *sagittaria* "nursery" sites for weevil release in the new year. The sites need to be protected to allow weevils to breed up and spread along infested *sagittaria* sites.

Please contact Andrea on 0419 841 834 for more information.



**Fruit-feeding weevil. Sourced T. Murray *Sagittaria* on Colombo Creek, 2021.**  
<https://bugguide.net/user/view/1368>

### Yanco Creek System environmental monitoring 2021 - 2022

CSU in conjunction with YACTAC and Commonwealth Environmental Water Office (CEWO) are conducting environmental monitoring in the YCS (Yanco, Billabong, Colombo and Forest creeks) to understand water flows and native fauna responses. In August surveying equipment was deployed on 14 properties and one reserve, from Morundah to Moulamein. The monitoring is focusing on birds, bats, frogs and turtles in wetlands and creeks to generate a long-term data on the value of creek habitat. Platypus and Rakali (water rat) will be surveyed in March 2022.

In September all sites will all be re-visited. Fyke nets will be deployed to monitor aquatic species and Rakali surveying will also take place, along with frogs and birds. To keep updated or follow the project photos will be uploaded to Facebook on Creek Country - Lifelines of the Riverina and the YACTAC website.



**CSU monitoring project and White-bellied sea eagle nest, August 2021**

### NSWIC

- Water Blueprint released, which focuses on:
- Allocation blackbox
- SDLAM
- Basin Plan reconciliation and implementation
- Flood plain harvesting
- Metering reforms
- Water market reforms
- River losses and deliverability
- Connectivity and drought rules
- Climate change

### WaterNSW

#### Metering compliance

- Meeting compliance assistance is available to water users. Contact Chris Shaw WaterNSW.
- 1 Check your licence and approval details.
  - 2 Contact WaterNSW or DQP.
  - 3 Contact YACTAC for assistance if necessary.
- MDBA standards of accuracy 2.5% + or -
  - Exclusive BLR take to submit monthly use, if not telemetered.

### SDLAM—YSAG

#### Regular meetings

- Modelling work is still being refined.
- 3Rivers is designing structures for Hartwood and Wanganella Weirs.
- Aboriginal engagement is underway.

### YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

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

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

**PO Box 53  
HOWLONG NSW 2643**

**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  
**e: [yactac.tanya@outlook.com](mailto:yactac.tanya@outlook.com)**

**Project Officer**

Andrea Mitchell 0419 841 834  
**e: [yactac.env@outlook.com](mailto:yactac.env@outlook.com)**

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.



## Wind in the willows

– improving the health of Colombo Creek 2021-2022

On-ground willow removal at Colombo Creek will be delivered as part of the recently secured \$22,000 Murray -Darling Healthy Rivers Program Small grant. Willows (*Salix babylonica*) colonise creeks through their extensive root system.

Removal of willow at one site, a flyer, field day and workshop will be delivered in 2021-2022.



*Willows on Colombo Creek, 2021.*

## Refreshing River Health

An innovative long-term project and funding to refresh creek health led by Murray LLS is up and running. New manager Bernie Cockayne has been appointed to oversee the project with YACTAC and Holbrook Landcare in support roles. Bernie grew up in Deniliquin and will be moving back to the region for this position. More information to come in the summer newsletter.

## Platypus update and citizen science

Joanne Connolly, platypus expert from CSU is keen to organise platypus surveying in spring and autumn along the Yanco Creek System and Wagga. This follows on from the successful platypus event at Morundah in June. If you would like to be involved contact Andrea.



*Platypus*

*Photo by  
C. Tzaros*

## Stories and photos of the Yanco Creek System

We have been hearing some fabulous stories about the Yanco Creek System and its history, such as tobacco seedlings which were produced near Conargo and then sent to Myrtleford, Victoria to be grown and harvested (courtesy of Jim Maher, originally from Wanganella, NSW). Do you have any interesting anecdotes or stories about the creeks? We would love to hear from you and add them to the newsletter.



*Tobacco plantation.  
Sourced [https://  
www.alpinelink.com.au/  
tobaccoproduction](https://www.alpinelink.com.au/tobaccoproduction)*