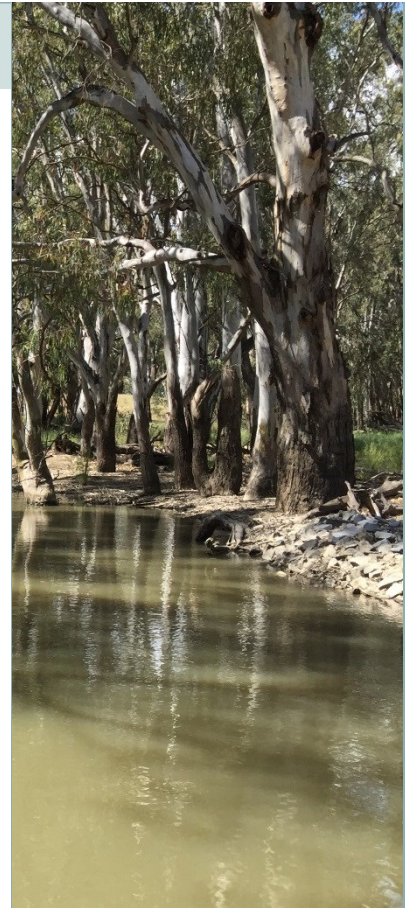




Newsletter



President - Trevor Clark

Early in June I attended the second MDBA River Reflections Conference in Mildura. With the election of a Labor government and therefore new minister, the MDBA was guarded about their future direction. Some messages from keynote speakers are summarised on page two.

Given the recent presentation by MDBA, I thought I would look at some of the water now held by non-consumptive users:

- CEWO approx 2860GL
- The Living Murray 500GL
- Barmah-Millewa 150GL every year
- Water for Rivers 240GL (Snowy)
- Murray Wetlands Working Group 30GL
- Additional Dilution flows for SA out of Menindee 700GL
- Planned Environmental Water and Rules base water (unknown volume)
- Conveyance Water about 900GL to run the Murray River
- Both Victoria and NSW also hold environmental water

The list goes on and now there is talk of increasing the reserves of Critical Human Needs Water and high security town water. I am not sure where they are going to hold the GS water! Dams will have to fill multiple times during the irrigation season to achieve a 100% allocation announcement.

Our focus continues to be the SDLAM Modernisation project. Since our rejection of the original concept weir designs, we are now dealing with a new Design Focus Group who are responsible for weir designs. The fish report is in, the cultural heritage report should be available soon, the operational plan is nearly complete and the EIS should start soon. We are progressing, all though it's taking so much time, with multiple meetings most weeks.

Throw in meetings for Better Bidgee, Reconnecting River Country along with NSWIC, WaterNSW, EWAG etc, it's easy to be double booked!

Andrea continues with her projects and thanks to her work the YCS is seen as a model for other rivers.

Annual General Meeting

Council rooms Jerilderie - 25 August from 1pm - light refreshments

All welcome.

Guest Speakers: WaterNSW, DPE Environment, DPE Water.

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EMAIL OPTION

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

WaterNSW

Monthly YCS Operating meetings

- Pre-releases from Blowering and Burrinjuck will see increased flows into the YCS.

Water Added Value Environment—WAVE

- Online portal for customer access.
- Existing customers to be integrated in next 9 months.
- Online registrations.
- WAL online applications/amendments.
- Dealings, guided product selection.

Customer Advisory Group

- Commencing customer conversations in preparation for next 2025 IPART determination.
- ACCC review of WCIR which may result in ACCC not IPART undertaking the 2025 pricing determination.
- The maintenance program is on track. Tarrabah weir fish way debris was removed after flooding. The Yanco fixed crest weir went underwater.
- Shaun Gleeson is the local operations contact person.
- Grandfathered licenses under review.
- WaterNSW is not intending to have shop fronts. Interactions will all be via online.
- BLR volume has been reviewed for the Murrumbidgee WSP. No action on an individual basis.

NRAR

- Annual priorities are:
 - ◇ Water metering.
 - ◇ Irrigated agriculture.
 - ◇ Overdrawn accounts.
 - ◇ Extraction limits in at risk sources.

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

We are gearing up to another 'end of financial year'. With so much time spent on the SDLAM project and scheduled time on Reconnecting River Country, it is timely to mention that YACTAC is contracted to DPE to provide key on-ground knowledge. Trevor and I don't hold back on our views on the SDLAM project and we have had several wins over this last year. Time spent on these projects is charged to the department.

Another area of high risk is the Murrumbidgee Regional Water Strategy. NSWIC is pushing back hard on the RWS as industry wasn't consulted, only councils and cultural representatives. If the RWS's are approved in their current form, then it could erode allocations. This is another slow moving program and it is only early days.

The board worked on the 2022-23 budget at the last meeting, along with other governance demands. Regular meetings are held and I would like to thank the board for their commitment to YACTAC. Trevor has taken on the role of President with gusto, ably assisted by Bob as Vice President. These men spend many volunteer hours on behalf of the broader Yanco Creek System community and their commitment should be widely recognised.

Given we haven't had a community gathering for some time, due to COVID, I am looking forward to catching up with members at the next Annual General Meeting in August.

President - Trevor Clark continued

MDBA River Reflections Conference messages from keynote speakers:

Sir Angus Houston: will be trying to bring the states together so the MDBP can be completed by 2024, he is looking forward to working with the new minister, Tanya Plibersek, who he knows very well.

Andrew Reynolds: stressed the importance of the completion of SDLAM projects, including the Yanco Modernisation Project, so the 605GL can be ticked off, allowing for more efficient river operations.

Troy Grant: his entire speech was about NSW not gaining accreditation for any of their 20 Water Resource Plans (all other state WRPs have been accredited), and the over extraction of water in the northern basin. Without the plans the Inspector General is unable to enforce compliance. Many of the WRP's are not compliant because of the way Planned Environmental Water is classified. Not sure how we are supposed to understand it when the description of PEW is different between the MDBA and NSW legislation. Other states don't have PEW in their legislation, so there was no anomaly.

Tanya Plibersek: stated her hopes of completing the plan that was introduced by Tony Burke and the recovery of the 450GL.

Interestingly, South Australia has received above average flows for the last 8-10 months (in the last 3 months more than one million MLs over and above their average flows), but *'has it fixed the problems in the lower lakes?'*, I don't think so.

With the MDBA board, BCC, CEWO, IGO available, many side discussions were held.

Yanco Creek near Wiraki and Wilsons Anabranch.

This environment is what we are all trying to protect.



Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

It has been another busy few months and it is a joy to be out and about on the YCS. I'd especially like to draw attention to the community 'Visioning Survey' for Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong project. The best kind of natural resource management and investment locally can only happen well when community have a voice.

Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong (RRCB) project

Survey for RRCB now open

YACTAC is seeking community and stakeholder guidance to direct the Water Management Plan for RRCB project. In brief the project is \$10 million over 10 years to build on the health of waterways in three pilot areas of southern NSW. YACTAC is running one project 'Refreshing Rivers – Central Billabong' for much of the Yanco Creek System (just north of Morundah to Wanganella).

JC NRM Consulting (Dr John Conallin and Dan Hutton, Deniliquin) are undertaking the task of developing the RRCB Water Management Plan. A **survey** has been developed and is available on the YACTAC website and will be emailed with this newsletter. Hard copies can also be picked up from the Murray Local Land Services office, Jerilderie.

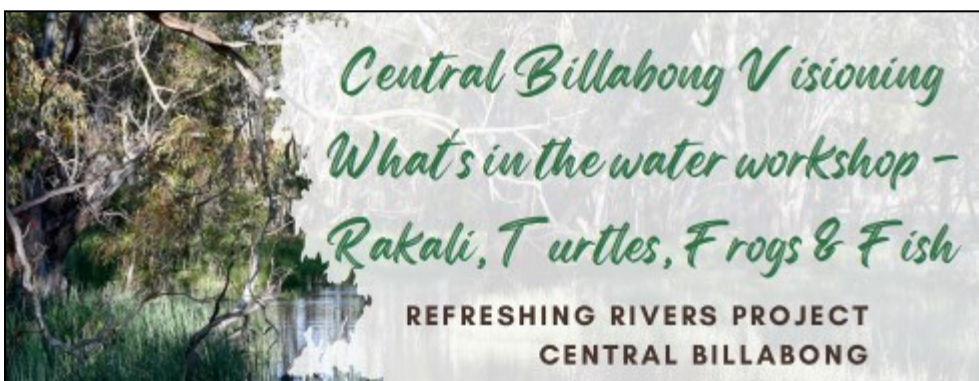
The survey is to gather information so community can shape where and what the investment goes to locally. It is rare to have a project with a long-term investment and it will make a difference, but only if we get the community sentiment right... so, your local opinion counts.

A community event '**Central Billabong Visioning. What's in the water workshop - rakali, turtles, frogs and fish**' is planned for 5 July at Morundah. The night will include experts talking about the unusual native critters of the creek, as well as practical advice on helping with habitat. We also want to workshop with locals about their vision for the Central Billabong. Soup and supper will be catered for by the Morundah Pub (see flyer for details).

Filming, by Grigg Media, to describe Refreshing Rivers project took place on 17 May and sites visited included Yanco Weir, and the properties 'Yarrabee', 'Bundure', 'Old Coree' and Wanganella. Video clips will be available on the YACTAC website and Facebook in the coming weeks.

A Facebook page 'Yanco Creek System' has been set up to share the best information on the environment, community, agriculture and industry regionally. It will also promote activities of the Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong project. We welcome new stories or happenings on YCS to promote.

The YACTAC website has the latest news on Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong project.



Regional Water Strategies

- Long term 20 year strategies.
- Priorities and actions for: Towns, communities, industries, aboriginal people and environment.
- Climate science underpins strategies.

DPE - Environment and Heritage

- Another name change, previously EES.
- 2022-23 annual watering program developed.
- Wanganella Swamp received flows for an extended period before draining to dry out sections.
- Supplementary water was used to ensure water levels didn't drop dramatically after high flow events.
- Environmental pumping took place at Rhyola with mixed results.
- Lower Forest Creek received water to try and reconnect with Rhyola. Water didn't reach Rhyola.
- Wilsons anabranch received autumn flows.

CEWO

- 2022-23 annual watering program to focus on:
 - Maximise floodplain inundation in later winter and early spring to mid Murrumbidgee wetlands.
- Target native fish connectivity.
- Support colonial waterbird breeding events.
- Reconnection flow in autumn 2023 for mid Murrumbidgee wetlands downstream of Wagga.

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**

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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

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Project Officer

Andrea Mitchell 0419 841 834
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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.

Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

Yanco Creek Wetland Field Day

A field day at 'Broome', on the backwaters of the Yanco Creek, was organised by Charles Sturt University and YACTAC. Keen landholders, managers, naturalists and eager locals gathered to learn more about the Yanco Creek System. After being welcomed by the Leeds family (Gillian, David and Susie) various guest speakers spoke on topics such as reptiles, environmental water, water bugs and current environmental monitoring. The highlight was Dr Damian Michael captivating everyone with his reptile collection and later capturing a curl snake (*Suta suta*) on the night walk. A delicious barbeque meal was catered for by the Jerilderie Fishing Club at dusk.



Dr Michael with curl snake.

Wind down the Willows project

The curtain of willows was removed at 'Colombo' to reveal an iconic Australian view of sentinel redgums hanging over a meandering creek. Gary Williams from Jerilderie Earthmoving was out on the June long weekend clearing the willows (*Salix babylonica*) on Andrew Buckingham's property at Colombo Creek. The water levels remained high, but with Gary's excavator prowess he was able to scoop willows from deep within the creek.

As the willows had encroached into three-quarters of the creek their removal directly improved Colombo Creek through better water flow. In the long term an overall healthier creek system is envisaged through rehabilitation of the riparian area with tubestock planting and natural regeneration.

If you are interested in willow removal on your patch of the Yanco Creek System send an expression of interest to Andrea.



Colombo Creek - Willows 2021 before and after - June 2022. What a difference!

SDLAM - Modernisation

There is too much information about this project to cover in this newsletter. As such, I will email a document to members that I prepared for the YACTAC general meeting which was held on 31 May. This document will endeavour to enlighten members on the massive effort being put in on your behalf. I will also email a brief history of YACTAC and how we have been dealing with potential infrastructure changes in recent times.

If you have any questions, please contact either Tanya Thompson or Trevor Clark.

