



Newsletter

President - Trevor Clark

The season is turning and with that the jobs change as well.

Again, it continues to be a busy time for the YACTAC team. Andrea had a busy start to 2023 with lots of activity on the creek. Final activities on two projects were completed and many on-site visits were made. Some new projects commenced and planning undertaken for future opportunities.

While January was reasonably quiet February hit Tanya and I like the recent floods. The 21st Yanco SDLAM SAG meeting was held in Morundah last month, with 3 CAG meetings held in 2020, the tally is 24 full day meetings just on SDLAM for community members. So far not one sod has been turned!

We met up with some Upper Yanco landholders to discuss the proposed changes under the SDLAM Modernisation project, Better Bidgee and Reconnecting River Country. Only the Modernisation project is funded, so it is wait and see for the other two projects. Not much change in 3 years.

Tanya and I attended the SDLAM Modernisation Yanco Value Management workshop held at the GHD office in Melbourne, with attendees from 4 states. This was a very intense day, analysing each weir in minute detail with the purpose of deciding which weir should go to the next stage.

NSWIC held their AGM in November and after elections of the board they were left with a vacancy. I decided to nominate for a board position and I was accepted at the March meeting. It was interesting sitting at the table again after an absence of some 20 years. Some members are still there, some members sons are now attending. Addresses from Andrew McConville (MDBA), Dr Simon Banks (CEWH), Kevin Anderson (NSW Water Minister), Michael Wrathall (senior advisor to Tanya Plibersek), with the subject of buybacks on everybody's lips. Surprisingly, there doesn't seem to be a lot of talk locally. The Murrumbidgee Valley isn't included in Bridging the Gap buy-backs, but the Murray Valley is. Unfortunately the creek is likely to be targeted in future buybacks and every time water is removed from the YCS we have to find an equal amount of environmental water to maintain flow.

The comment from Michael Wrathall that any SDLAM project unlikely to finish before June 2024 would be wound up and project teams dismissed was shocking: six years work, hundreds of meetings, millions spent and we could end up with only an EIS report.

Attending the NSWIC meeting enables access to many speakers. As such we are organizing a tour in April for Dr Simon Banks, we were also able to link presenters from Fisheries to Dr John Conallin to put pressure on the type of fish ladder proposed for the SDLAM weirs.

Cheers Trevor



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EMAIL OPTION

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

NSWIC

- Trevor Clark is now a board member.
- Beyond Buybacks promotion.
- Meetings in Canberra on a regular basis.
- New campaign platform to educate public.
- Linking irrigators with the delivery of environmental water on public and private lands.
- Developing Basin Plan strategy - next steps.

Monitoring Work

- February sites visited: New Era, Sheepwash, Mollies Lagoon, Coonong, Cocketgedong, Bundure, Broome, Wangamong Creek, The Yanko, Muntoora, Wilsons anabranh, Hartwood, Quiamong, Wanganella.

WaterNSW

- Back into regulated conditions.
- Real Time Data to be superseded.
- New executive and restructure almost complete.
- Local water management team: Albury, Mildura.
- Preparation for the next round of IPART pricing determination.

Facebook

[Follow the 'Yanco Creek System' page on Facebook.](#)

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

December saw activities winding down and was followed by a quiet January but February and March activities have been close to unmanageable. Hence the lateness of this newsletter.

One of the highlights was evening with WaterNSW new CEO, Andrew George and the entire board in Tumut. WaterNSW were touring the Murrumbidgee Valley and this presented the perfect opportunity to put all the views and suggestions directly to those that can influence WaterNSW operations. For three hours I had a captive audience and I didn't waste a second. I saw Clair Cameron, Executive Manager Corporate Affairs, a few days later in Sydney and she had been informed of the productive dinner meeting. So time will tell how influential the meeting actually was.

With the result of the NSW election we will have a new Water Minister which may lead to a change in advocacy for rural communities and the irrigation sector. We did have a strong advocate in Melinda Pavey at MINCO and to a lesser extent Kevin Anderson, we are waiting to see how the next MINCO plays out. There is an air of uncertainty, especially with the federal government holding the line on completing the MDBP by 30 June 2024.

YACTAC is putting forward a number of motions to the local NSW Farmers group. The motions are around the MDBP shortfalls as we see it, buybacks, rules based water and the inability of WaterNSW to provide information to their customers during floods.



Billabong Creek after the recent flooding - January 2023

YACTAC Board Election

At the next AGM (September) an election for board positions will be held. We have a number of board members who have been volunteering their time for over 20 years and they have indicated they are ready to hand the batten over. Currently the YACTAC constitution states that three board members must be elected from each of the Upper, Middle and Lower sections of the creek. It is proposed to amend the constitution to have a minimum of two from each section with the remaining 3 positions being filled from any section. We encourage members to provide their views on this proposed change.

We are keen to mentor members who are interested in becoming involved in the board, with an open invitation to the next board meeting in May.

Please contact Tanya to find out more.

SDLAM - Modernisation

This project has gained momentum with Matt Barden back at the helm, whether the new pace is quick enough to meet the MDBP's 30 June 2024 deadline is questionable.

Trevor and Tanya have been included in all the sessions, whether it be local, interstate or online. It is plainly obvious that the ambitious targets of 4 weirs and numerous other smaller projects won't be within budget or construction timelines, so recent discussions have been around getting the best outcome possible.

Both of us are concerned about what will actually be built, especially given the comments from Michael Wrathall, (see page 1). We feel it is essential Hartwood weir be constructed. The finer details are yet to be thrashed out with regards to weir design but they are well progressed.

When we started this journey there were 52 different construction sites and options. By the end of this project we feel there will only be a handful built.

Tanya is pushing hard for a better outcome at Wilson's anabranch and in the Upper Yanco. One activity that will not be progressed is the removal of obsolete and degraded weir structures, such as Wanganella Homestead weir.

*Cheverells Creek
Offtake to be
upgraded.*



Testimonial—Ruth McRae

YACTAC offers engaged and proactive advocacy for our Local Government Areas and wider regional footprint. For decades YACTAC has been a valuable advocacy body, well placed at the tables of decision making and influence, consistently pushing local views to protect and enhance our waterways.

Our communities and unique ecology make this part of the world not only productive but vital to the whole sustainability equation. Corny though it may sound, we love where we live. It has been a highly productive region that benefits areas far beyond our local economy.

The small but passionate and engaged team at YACTAC give so generously to the cause of economic and environmental sustainability and bring decades of lived water experience via the Board.

What will ensure our communities longevity is a united and collaborative front, in which YACTAC consistently and doggedly engages.

We are apolitical - we just want the opportunity to work hard and care for our land and our waterways, which is our most precious resource. Politics should have no place in determining the Southern Basin's viability. Open communication, well researched transparent data and an adaptive and flexible Plan will ensure our future.

We are indeed very lucky to have such a credible body - YACTAC - leading us so capably!

Colombo Creek Fish Habitat Grant

- January 2023
- Three days monitoring
- Colombo Creek
- 10km creek stretch
- Electrofished 900kg carp went to Charlie Carp, Deni



Other non-native fish caught included:

- Redfin
- Goldfish
- Gambusia

Native fish caught & released:

- Redfin
- Eel-tailed catfish (<12)
- Yellow belly (1)
- Bony bream
- Gudgeons

Yes, we want more native fish in our creeks!

YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

[https://
landcare.nsw.gov.au/
groups/yanco-creek-and-
tributaries-advisory-](https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/yanco-creek-and-tributaries-advisory-)

**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

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Project Officer

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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

Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong Projects

African Boxthorn Rust Biocontrol Pilot

YACTAC ran an African boxthorn biocontrol project with Rice Growers Association (RGA) and secured 20 landholders to start the pilot program with several more on a waiting list. Only 10 kits were available and due to the floods distribution was delayed until December 2022.

The demonstration workshop occurred at Pretty Pine with attentive land managers involved in the process. Each person took home a kit which could treat eight branches on different boxthorn plants. To the participants credit they took photos before, during and six weeks after the biological control was administered and sent them in for CSIRO analysis. Although the results were not great, no rust seen so far, it could be lying dormant to re-emerge later, hence ongoing monitoring is required. The project did show how effective grassroots organisations are at messaging quickly and applying local knowledge to roll out a project of state and federal significance. We hope to be involved in a larger roll out later this year.



Attendees at the Pretty Pine workshop.

Clearwater Conversations workshop, February 2023

In the shade of the river red gums on the beautiful Billabong Creek, Jerilderie, a community planning workshop was hosted by YACTAC as part of the 10-year Refreshing Rivers project. Guest speaker Dr John Conallin, an expert in freshwater ecology and fish, took water samples and discussed water quality, especially turbidity as an element to be improved into the future. He also spoke about the presence of carp and their impact increasing turbidity through "mumbling" (sucking up sediment to sort and feed which destroys creek beds and banks). From the discussions the attendees led by Carina Roemer, Griffith University, workshopped actions to improve the Central Billabong. It was great to see people invested and involved with the process and the outcomes will inform the project's future direction. The day was finished with a delicious lunch of poached and fried Murray Cod, BBQ and salad provided by Jerilderie Fishing Club. Thank you to all who participated.

For more information on YACTAC and Refreshing Rivers Central Billabong projects check out the YACTAC web page or Facebook under Yanco Creek System. A new website for Refreshing Rivers will be ready in June 2023.