



# Newsletter

## President - Trevor Clark

We had high hopes for a secure future for both the environment and our community with the \$106 million accelerated SDLAM project, Modernising the Yanco Creek System. Since attending a SDLAM Value Management workshop in Melbourne in February, let's look at what we have left, remembering this project started out with 52 different options. In April the Yanco Stakeholders Advisory Group attended their 21st full day meeting and were told the project now is left with: 2 weirs (Hartwood and Wanganella - originally there were 4 weirs), some new monitoring stations (again much reduced), replacement of the inlet at Wilson's Anabranch, some infrastructure at Wanganella swamp and Cheverells Creek.

We still have issues with the number of gates in the weirs: the original design had 2 gates that were 2 metres wide (totally unsuitable), then we were offered 8 (which was accepted and designs changed) now we are arguing for something in-between.

Some may wonder, "Where has all the money gone?" Good question! I won't go into details except to say it's the way of bureaucracy but an interesting cost is the carbon offsets required (\$millions).

The other issue with SDLAM is the Operations Plan (version 9 I think). This covers the operating rules for the new infrastructure and how the Yanco Creek System will be run in order to create savings. Each new version has a surprise, the latest being the requirement of a 15% GS allocation in the Murrumbidgee valley before the YCS receives base flows. This version was before 2 weirs were dropped, so the 15% is likely to increase. I see this as completely unacceptable.

While we continue on we still have the issue of the Federal government who have stated any project not going to be completed by June 2024 will be dropped, by then we will have a glossy EIS and not much else, how very disappointing if that's the end result.

Cheers Trevor

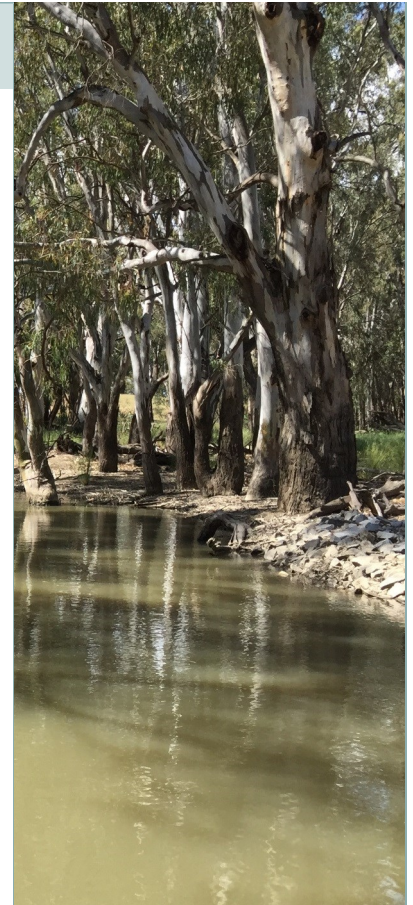
## YACTAC AGM and Board Election

**Conargo Hall - 21 September from 1pm** - light refreshments - all welcome.

Invited Guest Speakers: WaterNSW, DPIE Environment, WINSW - SDLAM, CSU Monitoring.

As mentioned in the last newsletter we will be seeking new board members due to the retirement of long standing volunteers. YACTAC requires an active board to continue, so please consider nominating.

More details to be emailed closer to the date.



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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.
- 40th Anniversary to be held at Whitton Malt House
- Monthly meetings on the Southern Basin issues

## Monitoring Work

- April monitoring.
- Adult catfish (380mm) caught at Hartwood.
- Unspecked hardy head in Forest and Billabong Creeks.
- Turtles in large numbers.

## WaterNSW

- Translucency flows are being released according to the WSP.
- Air space target is to be met by 31 May.
- Burrinjuck to be at full supply by 1 September.
- Inflow into Burrinjuck between Oct 22 and April 23 was 2,075GL.
- Below median rainfall up until July is expected.
- Working to minimize rate of fall across the valley.
- Tighter river operations to minimize any operations surplus at the end of system.
- Passed more than twice the total storage capacity over the last 12 months.

## Facebook

Follow the 'Yanco Creek System' page on Facebook.

## Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

### Wetlands for Wildlife, May 2023

What's not to love, being outdoors amongst redgums, planting and restoring wetlands, a sunny day, a barbeque, kids having fun and mud. 'Wetlands for Wildlife' has been a five-month project for YACTAC enhancing wetlands which culminated in a May plant-out with students from Coleambally Central School. The students worked hard planting and guarding 120 sedge seedlings, transplanting phragmites and nardoo and installing rock substrate for the Southern bell frog (*Litoria raniformis*). A barbeque sustained the happy helpers and as for the mud, a few kids ended up completely covered!

The 'Wetlands for Wildlife' project aims to improve habitat in local wetlands for the Southern bell frog, a NSW listed threatened species. The project was co-funded by Murray Local Land Services and YACTAC with YACTAC managing the project in partnership with the Leeds family at "Broome", on a wetland off the Yanco Creek. On ground works included planting 2000 seedlings in December 2022 as the floodwaters receded, spraying and removing weeds, installing artificial rock substrate habitat for bell frogs to bask and contract



planting of 1500 groundcover plants. Other works completed from a previous project included fencing the area from stock and direct seeding in March 2023. Here's hoping the new plants will soon provide refuge and habitat for bell frogs and other species.

A big thank you to Dr Anna Turner, CSU - Charles Sturt University, Lachlan Spalding, Murray Local Land Services, farmer David Leeds, teacher Briony Fattore and students from Coleambally Central School, who through exemplary teamwork made the community planting day a great one. A special mention and thank you to Julie and Garry Williams from Jerilderie Earthmoving who donated the rock substrate.



L to R: Andrea, David, Briony, Anna and Lachlan.

## Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

It is that time of year when we prepare for 30 June and the next financial year. This time brings a heavier focus on the administrative and governance tasks which are essential to ensure the continuation of YACTAC, as a compliant and key stakeholder to the many groups we are involved in. In order to apply for grant funding for activities on our creek system we need to demonstrate that we adhere to current business standards, so this activity is very important. We are fast approaching a time when there is too much work for just two part-time people. The coming year may see extra people engaged to run projects that have received grant funding, rather than rely on Andrea to project manage those activities, in addition to her daily tasks.

## YCS Tour - CEWH and Griffith Uni

In April we had the opportunity to showcase our area to Dr Simon Banks, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (and Murrumbidgee team) and Prof Sue Jackson, Australian Rivers Institute - Griffith University. Neither had been to the sites we took them to and they provided very positive feedback during the tour.

An immediate positive result from the visit was an increase in environmental water being ordered for the Yanco and Colombo Creeks when flows were very low in late April. Given CEW Office fund the environmental monitoring that is undertaken in the YCS, it is essential that our wetlands are showcased.

Prof Sue Jackson spent a week touring our area and will be back again in June. Sue leads a project on the 'water cultures' of the Murray Darling Basin and is conducting the social research component. She met small and large landholders, towns people and experts in the environmental field, covering areas from the Yanco Offtake to Wanganella Swamp. Some of the key areas we took Sue in addition to the above were: Tarrabah weir, confluence of the Yanco and Colombo Creeks, Bundure, Colombo Ski School, Broome on the Yanco Creek, Jerilderie Lake, CICAL and MIL escapes, Old Coree, Hartwood Weir, Forest Creek, Conargo, Billabong Creek, Boonoke and Wanganella Weir.



*Trevor Clark with Simon Banks addressing the tour group.*



*Nella Smith and Sue Jackson deep in conversation at Hartwood Weir.*

YACTAC hosted a BBQ dinner by Algdudgerie Weir so Sue could meet many more local identities. If you would like to be part of the project or just learn more visit this website:

[Water Cultures Network \(griffith.edu.au\)](https://www.griffith.edu.au/water-cultures-network).

We also spoke to Sue about the Water for Rivers project which now will be a focus for the project. At some point in the future Sue will also be writing a book about her research.

### YACTAC

#### GENERAL MEETING

- Open invitation to members.
- 7 June - 2pm
- Monash Room Jerilderie (behind library)
- Guest speaker: Dinawan Energy Hub

#### MDBA

- Basin Plan Evaluation completed 2025.
- Basin Plan Review 2026.
- Regional Community Forums to continue.
- River Reflections Conference June 2023.

#### Bio-control Sagittaria

- The co-funded 3 year program completed.
- Release of fruit eating weevil.
- Emailed final report to members.
- More research to be undertaken.
- YACTAC board agreed to continue so-funding program for the next three years.

#### 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: [eo@yactac.org.au](mailto:eo@yactac.org.au)**

**Project Officer**

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

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

The Refreshing Central Billabong (RCB) project has seen me out in the field with the Refreshing Rivers team filming and photographing the creeks and community. The final RCB Waterway Management plan was presented to community and is now ready to guide works for the coming years. A website for the Refreshing Rivers Project will be launched in June. YACTAC has several other projects looking to enhance the Yanco Creek System including the 'Wetlands for Wildlife' project which was completed in May and the new 'Rolling out all Resources' which will commence in June.

If you would like to know more about YACTAC's projects or have an idea for a new project, please give me a call and I am also happy to do site visits. MOB 0419 841 834 or EMAIL [env@yactac.org.au](mailto:env@yactac.org.au).

Link to [Refreshing Central Billabong WMP](#)



*Helene Mortlock being filmed on the banks of the Billabong Creek.*

### Conargo Public School and Petaurus ruby saltbush project

YACTAC has been advising on a Petaurus Education Group and Conargo Public School project to collect and grow a rare variety of ruby saltbush with typically yellow fruit and grey foliage.

Petaurus, based in Burrumbuttock NSW, delivers a range of learning experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and communities to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues across northern Victoria and regional NSW.

Andrea Mitchell, YACTAC, went on an excursion with the school to "Barrabool", north of Conargo, to source and collect the seeds. The students, all boys, had great fun "getting their eye in" to pick the correct species and form. Andrea spoke to them about the plant identification, methods of collection, storage and planting. The students will be growing plants in hycy trays, donated by YACTAC, and selling them at the end of the year.

Thanks to Michael Bull for allowing us to collect from his property.



*Pam Thorpe with children from Conargo Public School.*