



Newsletter

President - Trevor Clark

PRESIDENTS REPORT

We are back to a more normal weather pattern, with the Creek flows back to what we would expect in the autumn. We have had some enquiries about how low the creeks are at the moment, but with no irrigation orders and minimum of 50 mls /day flow at Darlot currently 321 ML / day, unfortunately Water NSW may even drop levels further yet . It's not only our Creek system but most of the rivers are now at very low levels for the Autumn Again it highlights the importance of irrigation water to maintaining good flows particularly in the summer .

While the creeks have settled , the water debate continues with the passing of the Water Amendment Bill and the pursuing of more water for the environment , if that is not enough we also have the Water NSW licensed review, Murrumbidgee Regional Water Strategy Plan review, the Snowy licensed review the iPART determination on water pricing for the next five years and the progressing of the SDLAM project. All these reviews will have an impact on how our Creek system is run, whether it's because of buybacks or changes to how allocations are announced. Government departments want to include unknown factors like climate change and increases in critical human needs water to be set aside before making allocations or allowing flows through our system .

After spending many hours arguing against the proposed huge price increases (up to 63%) Tanya and I were invited to have dinner with Water NSW board , CEO Andrew George and senior executives in Leeton , The discussions where robust and informative from both sides . Since the dinner Tanya has been following up on some of the points raised for clarification and would be happy to discuss. WaterNSW are due to hand their submission in to IPART in September.

On a positive note, SDLAM is now entering the EIS and Construction phase with the extension of time to allow completion of two replacement weirs at Hartwood and Wanganella and some work on our Wetlands.

With so many challenges and reviews in the water space we have employed an administration officer in Bronwyn Thomas to allow Tanya to spend more time on advocacy. So welcome Bronwyn to the YACTAC team.

Cheers Trevor

YACTAC AGM

Dear Members,

The YACTAC Board extend a warm invitation for you to attend our upcoming

45th AGM

Wednesday 14 August 2024

Jerilderie Civic Centre

Meeting to commence 1.00pm

Guest speaker TBA



Board Members supporting the Sober in the Country message

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EMAIL OPTION

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

WaterNSW

- All the rivers are being drawn down with the cooler weather and less irrigation demand. The Yanco Creek System is no different. Expect lower than recent flows in every section of the system.
- The Darlot gauge target is 50ML/day and the system is currently at 327ML/day. So there is a way to go.
- There is significant pressure being applied for all water users to be more accurate in their water take. Water can't be taken legally unless it is ordered.
- I have been warned that the next WaterNSW CAG meeting will be targeting this topic. So PLEASE ensure you are compliant.

NRAR Training

- Rules around works in riparian areas and waterways has significantly changed over recent years.
- I encourage every landholder with creek frontage to review the current rules around 'Controlled Activity' permits, prior to any work being undertaken.
- Permits can't be applied retrospectively.
- Riparian zones can be up to 40 mtrs either side of the creek edge.
- NSW Planning Portal is where 'Controlled Activity' permits can be applied for.

Tanya Thompson

Facebook

Follow the 'Yanco Creek System' page on Facebook.

Instagram: YANCO2024

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson



Trevor, Colin and I had the great pleasure of visiting the Burrinjuck Dam late last month. This tour was organised by WaterNSW and included other Customer Advisory Group members. The tour was informative, enlightening and the team WaterNSW has to manage and maintain the infrastructure are to be commended. They certainly know their job and are

passionate about the role they play in the delivery of water and dam safety. No question was unanswered and the tour provided an opportunity to see what WaterNSW has spent on maintenance over the past.

WaterNSW's operating licence is under review and there are several key areas that may impact us. We are keeping a close eye on proceedings and will make submissions when appropriate. It is early days yet.

The WaterNSW Pricing Work Group held their 5th meeting with Trevor and myself attending. It has been a long haul with over 20 hours spent online in these meetings. The outcome is deeper understanding of the pricing structure, limitations on pricing variability, shock of the number of WAMC departments and their costs, as well as the realisation that bulk water will be significantly dearer from 1 July 2025. How much is yet to be determined by IPART.

The NSW Water Minister Hon. Rose Jackson has committed a total review of extraction limits which incorporates the impacts of climate change and the environmental requirements of rivers to be considered on all Water Sharing Plans within the next four years. This includes no longer using the current LTAAEL base of 1994-95 volumes, to calculate the allocation of each valley. We need to watch this space.

Some good news is that the Basin Plan Review may provide an opportunity to broaden the scope of a singular focus on water recover and move towards a more holistic evaluation of environmental health. There was a summit recently where suggestions included: be clear on the assumptions that underpin our recommendations, as we include new information and knowledge; move beyond a singular focus on water recovery and water volumes to achieve and environmental improvement and sustainable communities; consider a more integrated approach to improve basin health. Mind you they are just suggestions currently, but at least the dialogue is happening.

We held a general meeting last week in Conargo which was crammed. The 2024-25 budget was finalised and current financials reviewed. The YCS Levy raised \$93,500 this financial year with \$53,000 spent on aquatic weeds and \$37,500 on scientific research alone. As you can see it doesn't go far.

SDLAM update

The last Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting was in February, and it is expected that the next meeting will be early August. The team will be presenting at our AGM. Work is being undertaken on the gauges which is being conducted by WaterNSW. We are eagerly awaiting the public exhibition of the EIS. An EOI has been broadly advertised for a Managing Contractor to steer the project through the construction phase.

Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

The last couple of months have been full of meaningful activity, and I have achieved several milestones for YACTAC. We released eel-tailed catfish at two sites on Billabong Creek, Conargo, and Jerilderie. Leading and participating in the Women's Yarning Circle and Chicks in the Sticks events were especially rewarding. The African boxthorn workshop at Wanganella was highly informative and a great initiative to support. My efforts in the Refreshing Rivers Program included project reporting, completing a Wetland ID course, and conducting quarterly water quality monitoring across five sites and working on the first Natural Capital Profile. I also continued monitoring meetings with CSU and CEWO and assisted with the Hartwood Wetland Field Day. I am actively seeking more properties for Natural Capital Profiles and am always available for support - just a phone call away.



Women's Yarning Circle

30 women gathered by the Billabong Creek at Jerilderie on Sunday 21st April to share and learn about the First Nations' cultural significance of the creek. Organised by the Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council (YACTAC) through the Refreshing Rivers Program, the event began by acknowledging the area's traditional custodians, the Jeithi, Wiradjuri, and Bpangerang people and local First Nations people.



Sitting by the bank of the Billabong Creek, under the shade of the River Red Gums and Black Box trees, attendees wove baskets, learnt how to make coolamons, and read children's books written in Wamba Wamba/ Wemba Wemba language and English whilst eating Johnny cakes.

Discussions revolved around local plants and their traditional use, turbidity levels of the creek, carp control and the importance of revitalising the local Indigenous language. It was a day for making new connections, reviving old connections, and coming together to share our passion for the health of our waterways, which are the lifeblood of our land and communities.

EWAG

- The next EWAG meeting is in Balranald in a few weeks. So I will provide an update via email.
- So far I have pushed a watering of the Wanganella Swamp in winter and early spring, as it will be the last opportunity to water before SDLAM requests a dry area to commence construction works.
- Wilson's anabranch is currently receiving the winter watering as per the works approval.
- The upper Yanco wetlands will be drying out due to winter flow conditions.

CSU Monitoring

- Andrea and I are involved in the planning of the MER 2.0.
- YACTAC is contributing \$30,000 towards fish monitoring. So far no trout cod have been found which is disappointing.
- However eel tailed catfish, silver and golden perch, Murray cod and unspotted hardyhead were detected.
- If you know anglers have caught trout cod, please take a photo and contact us.

Tanya Thompson

YACTAC Website

Google:landcare YACTAC

[https://
landcare.nsw.gov.au/
groups/yanco-creek-and-
tributaries-advisory-council](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
Bernie Pinnuck	0439	028	719

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

Project Officer

Andrea Mitchell 0419 841 834

e: env@yactac.org.au

Admin/Project Officer

Bronwyn Thomas 0427 433 123

e: info@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 Administration Officer, so our records can be kept up to date.



Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

Historic Milestone: Release of Eel-Tailed Catfish fingerlings in Billabong

On Sunday, April 14th, YACTAC celebrated a significant milestone with the release of 160 eel-tailed catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*) fingerlings in Billabong Creek, Jerilderie, NSW. Funded by YACTAC, this effort aims to bolster threatened catfish populations. The event was a collaborative success with Jerilderie Fishing Club and Murrumbidgee Council's Michaela Walsh supporting and attending. It was heartening to see local kids actively participating in this important environmental effort.

In a parallel effort, YACTAC also released 240 eel-tailed catfish in Billabong Creek, Conargo, NSW, on the same day. This initiative, part of a case study project in Conargo, focuses on removing carp, controlling weeds, and enhancing wetlands through instream planting to restore fish habitat and improve waterway health. The event saw enthusiastic participation from Conargo locals, children, and friends.

The release, supported by Dr. John Conallin's catfish program and the Refreshing Rivers ROAR project, marks a crucial step towards boosting biodiversity and health in the creek. Stay tuned for more updates as YACTAC continues its efforts to create a thriving waterway ecosystem for everyone!



YACTAC: Creating Community Connections

Left: Conargo locals & Eel-tail Catfish release

Below: Jerilderie Fishing Club & Andrea



Invitation to Chicks in the Sticks Event and High Tea in Moulamein

"Chicks in the Sticks" landing in Moulamein on July 4th, hosted by Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council (YACTAC) and generously funded by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR).

Thursday 4th July, 1pm registration, to 4.30pm Moulamein Bowling Club, Endeavour Dr, Moulamein NSW

With the fabulous guest presenter Cynthia Mahoney and enjoy delightful High Tea. Tickets are \$25 per chick from any nest.

With Cynthia leading the day, our Chicks are in for a day filled with community connection, actionable insights, personal growth opportunities, and a touch of humour that leaves a lasting impression. Mark your calendars, gather your chicks, and join us for a memorable day in Moulamein!

Please email yactac.project@gmail.com for ticket link.