



Newsletter

President - Trevor Clark

How seasons can change from a dry spring to a wet summer resulting in a loss of dry feed on pastoral country, downgraded cereal crops, etc. It has been a tough year.

IPART: the news just seems to get worse every time you hear from IPART with the proposed increases in government water charges for the next 5 years of up to 184%, yes 184%. Tanya and I have been attending meetings on this for 8 months, and it is not till everyone puts in their costings that you see the cumulative effect on charges. Let's hope IPART don't pass on the full proposal from WAMC and WaterNSW, although some of the increases came from the NSW government enforcing new responsibilities in the renewed licencing agreement with WaterNSW.

Reconnecting Rivers and Landholder Negotiation Scheme: these programs are still happening but have been put on the back burner.

Billabong Floodplain Management Plan and the Unregulated Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plan: The Billabong FMP is a new plan covering land not previously under a FMP. The floodway and flood inundation zones need ground truthing, as they are overstated. This requires many landholders to make a submission to dispute mapped areas. Tanya assisted many landholders with mapping and submission suggestions. Landholders will be required to have earthworks, such as levy banks, approved by WaterNSW. In many cases landholders will only have works approval for their pump sites, so this will be a costly and time consuming exercise. Without a flood work approval, NRAR could enforce landholders to remove any works. The other thing to watch out for is the new Murrumbidgee Unregulated WSP that has mapped wetlands, again with no ground truthing. Some wetlands are part of the creek, others are in the middle of farming areas. It is your responsibility to check the website and follow Tanya's email trail so you don't end up with a surprise down the track.

National Water Agreement: Wins in water came in small steps after meetings with NSW Water Minister Rose Jackson, we received a written commitment that she does not agree with the National Water Initiative and will not sign the new NWA in its current form. The proposed new NWA completely reprioritises how water is allocated, and it rates consumptive water as low priority. NSWIC and Claire Miller are working with the ministers' office to ensure a fair outcome for all.

YACTAC funded a section of the Flow-MER program, and we now have a report. I am sure Andrea will have a summary for you.

On behalf of the YACTAC board and team members, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Cheers Trevor.



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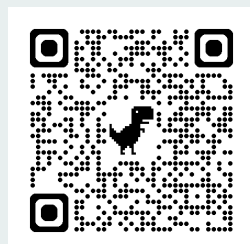
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Yanco Creek System



YACTAC2024



IPART - Pricing

- Online sessions for the WAMC and WaterNSW 2025-2030 bulk rural water pricing proposal have been held.
- Submissions were called for and made by YACTAC, NSWIC and many landholders.
- The proposed increases are significant.
- NRAR called for a doubling of their budget and the Inspector General had a similar claim.

EWAG

- NSW DCCEEW and CEWH delivered environmental water to Wanganella Swamp to support vegetation.
- Deliveries commenced via the Forest Creek on 22 Sept and will continue for another 10 days or so at a rate of 100ML/day.
- Fish pulse event began on 23 Oct for 3 weeks. The flow from the Yanco Offtake was boosted by CICL inflows. Water peaked at 1000ML/day for 10 days. The timing was designed to coincide with trout and Murray cod larval drift to maximise dispersal throughout the creek system.
- Mollys Lagoon also received water during the event.
- YACTAC applaud the efforts of all the people involved in these events.

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

The last few months have been brutal. The federal and state governments have been ramming through changes like they are going to an election and time is running out. Never before has an irrigation landholder been subjected to so much change and risk. Yanco Creek System members are well represented with Trevor and I attending every meeting, but sometimes we come away with the feeling that we are making little headway. We gain small wins, but overall the irrigation sector is facing strong headwinds. I would love to be more positive about the final outcome but I feel the best I can do is to inform members of what is coming up, what risks I see and ways to mitigate those risks and enjoy the small wins along the way.

Billabong Floodplain Management Plan

The new Billabong FMP is a massive burden thrust upon landholders. The current mapping is very inaccurate and many landholders contacted YACTAC for assistance with their submissions. We all pushed a similar message: the 2022 flood shouldn't be used, the mapping is inaccurate, environmental assets are incorrect, etc. It will be interesting to see the 'What we Heard' report and discover how much influence we actually had. This is only the first stage, so there will be more work to do next year.

Murrumbidgee Unregulated Water Sharing Plan

Ordinarily the unregulated WSP wouldn't involve YACTAC members as the Yanco Creek System is regulated, however the new unregulated plan has included wetlands. The WSP prescribed wetlands are scattered across the entire Murrumbidgee Valley with a vast number in the YCS. Many of the areas suggested are not 'wetlands' such as the Jerilderie Lake, the Colombo Ski School, sections of the Billabong Creek, etc. Once again many hours have been spent researching the Natural Resource Commission's recommendations, as well as the scores of documents and maps produced by the NSW department. Submissions are now due in January and February thankfully, as originally the date was 12 December, and will require more work to be undertaken to protect landholders and future access to water.

SDLAM update

The EIS covering the Hartwood and Wanganella regulators has finally been released. YACTAC obtained a hard copy of the EIS for future reference. The designs have been shared with YSAG members and are 80-90% complete. 3Rivers will finalise designs with other contractor input. Work is due to commence in the second quarter of 2025, with a completion date of December 2026. The two regulators are likely to be built at the same time due to time constraints.

WaterNSW is leading the three hydrometric stations landholder consultation and construction.

YACTAC has only met the SDLAM team a handful of times this year and sought more involvement but it was refused. After years of negotiation it appears, at the point of construction, we will receive a monthly email with an option to engage with the team if we make a request. Quite a disappointing situation.

Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

December brings the exciting challenge of three weeks of planting at three sites along the Yanco Creek System, engaging schools and local groups in hands-on restoration. The warm water makes it the perfect time to plant instream species, rolling out key initiatives from the Refreshing Rivers Program. Carp removal efforts are planned for December, and golden perch fingerlings and eel-tailed catfish will be released in the New Year—stay tuned to our social media for updates!

YACTAC have been successful this year with sponsorship from Spark Renewables, RES group and Squadron Energy. Renewable energy projects are bringing change to our region, with challenges and opportunities. Sponsorships enhance YACTAC funded community initiatives that restore waterways and ecosystems, helping us improve the environment.

We will also be completing another large project at Conargo continuing from the success of the ROAR project through the Refreshing Rivers Program. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to our project successes this year. Your support makes a real difference to the health of our waterways!

Wetland Planting in the Yanco Creek

Coleambally Central School students and teacher Briony Fattore planted jointed twig rush, spike rush, and sedges to restore a backwater habitat, creating crucial refuge for fish, frogs (especially the southern bell frog), and other aquatic life. This was the third planting project in recent years. The day included hands-on learning, with students conducting eDNA sampling and exploring the importance of waterway restoration.



The event marked the first of three Wednesdays of planting activities along the Yanco Creek System, involving three high schools and several primary schools. The day was supported by the Refreshing Rivers program, which aims to improve waterways. Miriam Crane, the new Refreshing Rivers Project Coordinator, joined the effort and got hands on.

The Leeds family have five hectares of protected wetland on their property 'Broome', combining natural regeneration with active restoration. It reflects a growing community commitment to caring for our waterways and teaching future generations the value of healthy ecosystems.



Photo: Students collecting eDNA samples

NSWIC

Submissions in our region supported by NSWIC:

- 1 Landholder Neg Scheme
- 2 Billabong Creek FMP
- 3 MDBA env water strategy
- 4 IPART pricing determination
- 5 Non urban metering policy
- 6 Unreg Murrumbidgee WSP
- 7 NRC WSP review

November meeting topics/outcomes:

- Trevor Clark re-elected director of NSWIC.
- Minister Jackson wont sign National Water Agreement without consultation.
- Murray Darling Basin Plan is being pushed to meet deadlines/outcomes.
- SDLAM 605 and 450 are being rammed through.
- Reconnecting River Country has received additional funding.
- Socioeconomic impact analysis was presented.
- Relaxation of metering requirements for small users.
- NSWIC First Nations water policy position discussed.

Snowy Hydro

- Snowy 2.0 on track to be completed late 2028.
- Cloud seeding halted.
- Licence review nearly finalised.
- Dry outlook with low inflows.

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

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Upper Section Committee:

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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
Bernie Pinnuck	0439	028	719

Lower Section Committee:

Bob Crawford	0427	875	955
Trevor Clark	0429	691	010
Colin McCrabb	0428	847	558

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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

Billabong Creek planting at Conargo

Last week Conargo Public School and Deniliquin High School students collaborated with YACTAC, Deni-Kolety Lagoons Landcare, and the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia to plant 600 native wetland species along 400 meters of Billabong Creek, at the bridge, Conargo.

Year 3-6 Conargo PS students, and Year 10 Deniliquin HS students, participated in planting efforts aimed at enhancing habitat for our native fish and bird species, especially the eel-tailed catfish.

The day also featured educational moments, such as a high school student's description on eel-tailed catfish nesting habits. Participants also revisited last year's planting site to see its impressive progress, reinforcing the value of their work.

With 18 dedicated volunteers from varied groups, the event demonstrated the power of collaboration to complete project which will make a difference – literally growing nature!

"What an amazing morning for our students, working alongside passionate experts to protect and restore our local environment," said a Conargo Public School representative.

This initiative aligns nicely with the goals of YACTAC and the Refreshing Rivers Program, enhancing creek health while delivering lasting benefits to both the community and the environment. It represents another small, but important step toward securing the long-term health of our beautiful Yanco Creek System.



Andrea Mitchell, volunteers & students at Conargo.

Brolgas nesting on the Colombo



There have been several sightings and a number of breeding pairs of Brolga in the upper section of the Colombo Creek in recent weeks. The perfect conditions have encouraged and supported many bird species and it is rewarding to see Brolgas breeding.

Brolga (November 24) Photo supplied by Nella Smith.