



Newsletter

President - Trevor Clark

Last week I visited the Snowy Hydro Discovery Centre in Cooma, and it is well worth the visit. The Snowy Scheme was seen as nation building to supply hydroelectricity and provide IRRIGATION water for the Murrumbidgee and Murray valleys, for food security. With the support of Prime Ministers Chifley, Menzies and the 'Can Do' leadership of William Hudson this project consisting of 80km's of aqueducts, 145 km's of tunnels, 8 power stations, 16 dams and was completed on time (25 years) and within budget. Still seen today as one of the most complex engineering projects in the world. I doubt if this project would be built in today's political climate.

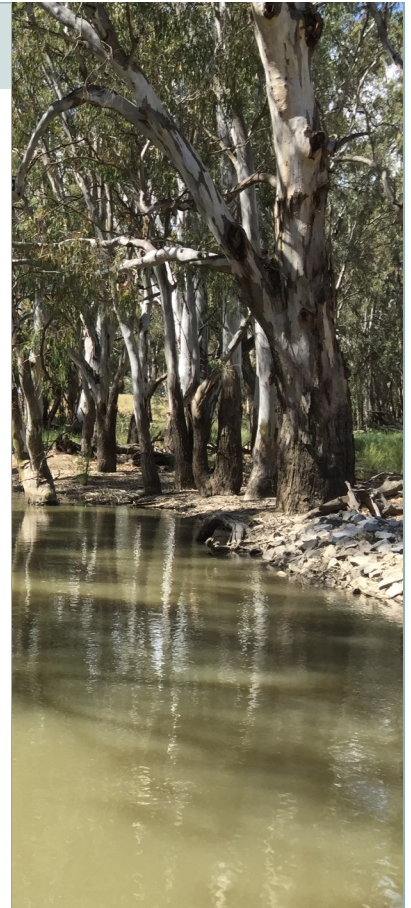
So, you may ask "Where is our SDLAM project up to?" With a completion date of December 2026 it is proposed to commence work on the smaller installations prior to commencing the Wanganella and Hartwood Regulators. The attendees at the business information session listened to an overview of the program, its status, delivery timelines, upcoming tenders, and the goods and services needed to support the program. Also shared was information on procurement, contract types, and relevant policies. A total of 80 people from 60 businesses attended. We eagerly await the building phase.

Our efforts ramped up a couple of notches when dealing with the proposed WSP Prescribed Wetlands in the Murrumbidgee unregulated water sharing plan. There were so many instances of areas identified that didn't meet the criteria. A new map was launched last week and had all the contentious areas removed, however we have since discovered that isn't the end of the matter. Tanya will elaborate on this.

As if that is not enough to deal with, we have the Flood Plain Management Plan, Reconnecting River Country, National Water Agreement, the IPART determination on future WaterNSW pricing and the YACTAC levy all requiring meetings and submissions from YACTAC. As a member of NSWIC, this allows us to use their resources and compare notes with other irrigators throughout NSW. So we would encourage landholders to pay the NSW Irrigators Council voluntary levy.

Tanya and I have regular meetings with the Southern Operations team at WaterNSW and have discussed low and fluctuating creek levels during the past few months. We are working with them to try and find a sweet spot for flows which also meets Darlot's End of System requirement. Please contact either myself or Tanya if you are experiencing flow issues.

Cheers Trevor.



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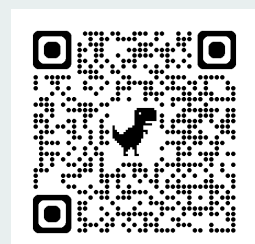


Yanco Creek System



YACTAC2024

YACTAC Website:



IPART - Pricing

- YCS Levy will be applied for at the 2005 rate of \$.09 per entitlement plus a 4% annual increase (to allow for inflation etc) from 1 July 2025, as agreed at the August AGM.

EWAG

- NSW DCCEEW arranged the delivery of CEWO environmental water to connect billabongs and creeks to maximise fish movement.
- Yanco Creek Offtake flow levels up to 1,100ML/day were targeted from late October to mid November.
- CEWO delivery volume Yanco Offtake: 7,250ML and CCD: 4,360ML.
- Actions taken to mitigate low DO readings in the Yanco Creek in December and January.
- Inflows from CCD: 150ML/day.
- CEWO delivery volume: 3,145ML.
- Broad scale fish surveys to commence in late March.
- Without environmental water the YCS would be significantly impacted.
- Data logger locations:

Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson

The last six months have been brutal. The sentiments of the last newsletter could be replicated in this one. Whilst I drill into detail, highlight the red flags and risks, make submissions, engage with landholders and all departments, our voices are not being heard. Worse still, the departments continue to call for submissions and feed back when they seem to have no intention of taking the slightest bit of notice. It appears to me that the NSW government is on a highway that has been laid down with no exit points or alternative pathways.

Trevor and I are doing our utmost to bring a balanced view to proposed changes. We are here to assist members in every way we can, so please contact us if you wish to discuss your particular concerns.

Billabong Floodplain Management Plan

The What We Heard report dropped late last week and it is sobering reading. Of the 100 submissions one could say there has been very little change. The 2022 flood event will be the one used, however inundation mapping has been amended ever so slightly: some areas removed but also more floodways have been added (unbelievable). Township areas are too small to see any visible changes.

4,691 emails, 2,642 website hits, 627 interactive spatial map hits, 87 appointment attendances: ALL FOR NOTHING!

There will be local public sessions from 30 April and we encourage **everyone** to **demand** answers as to why we should bother with submissions when they will be largely ignored! Hold CTRL key and [click here](#) for more details.

Murrumbidgee Unregulated Water Sharing Plan

There are a number of significant changes in this WSP that may affect your access and any future development. It is essential you review your licence against changes in access rules to see what impact you may experience. For example: *Take from off river pools* will be significantly restricted.

Well, the updated map shows there are only two WSP Prescribed Wetlands in the Yanco Creek System. Time to celebrate! Not so fast... Whilst the number of wetlands has reduced to 99 from 1476, Peter Hyde stated that this didn't include the Billabong Creek zone. This **minor** detail has not been stated in any printed information! We are pushing that the current mapping be adopted and no additional sites will be accepted. Whether this argument will be heard is debatable. We need everyone to be prepared to contact their local member and voice their views and concerns. Hold CTRL key and click [here](#) for more details.



Project Officer - Andrea Mitchell

Over summer, YACTAC released 25,000 golden perch fingerlings from Conargo to Morundah as part of Refreshing Rivers native fish stocking efforts. In January, we partnered with Dr. John Conallin for electrofishing to remove carp from Billabong Creek. We also hosted a successful Mussel Muster workshop, catching up with the community and learning about freshwater mussels. While continuing Refreshing Rivers projects, we have been promoting YACTAC in local newspapers, and scoping new sites for future projects. Thanks to everyone who supported these initiatives—we are excited for what is ahead in 2025!



Photo: Fred from Morundah releasing golden perch

Mussel Muster

A successful Mussel Muster event at The Cape, Jerilderie, brought together 22 enthusiastic participants to uncover the hidden aquatic life of the creek. The event highlighted the ecological and cultural importance of freshwater mussels, that were once common but now are in decline.

Under the guidance of Ros Lockhart, Jeithi Jerilderie Aboriginal Corporation, 10 participants searched a 50 metre section of the Billabong Creek using their feet, discovering 18 freshwater river mussels (*Alathyria jacksoni*). The average size recorded was 13.5 cm, with mussels found at an average depth of 70 cm.

It was fantastic to see the community so engaged, with over 10 people getting into the creek fully clothed in their enthusiasm to find mussels! Supported by Refreshing Rivers, the Mussel Muster is expected to be the first of many environmental initiatives at The Cape. The success of this open community event underscores the potential for future projects aimed at enhancing local knowledge and the health of the Central Billabong.



Photo: Collecting data on the Billabong Creek's freshwater river mussels.

NSWIC

- Claire Miller has been the CEO for the past 5 years and has decided to retire. Her knowledge and skills are second to none. It will be very difficult to replace her. YACTAC has had a great working relationship with Claire and we wish her better health into the future.

- Jim Cush has stepped down as Chair and Tom Green stepped into the position.

- Jim has lead NSWIC for 7 years and his passion is just as evident now as it was when he commenced. Jim is staying on the board, so he will be a great asset for Tom.

- Tom is from the Forbes area and has been on the board for many years and will steer the recruitment for the CEO position. He is well suited to the role.

- Roy Butler MP Barwon will chair the NSW inquiry into the impact of the Restoring our Rivers Act on regional communities. Our local member Justin Clancy MP is on the panel and we have a meeting with Justin in a few weeks. More information and a submission can be made on this link: CTRL and [Click here](#)

- Other topics at the meeting last week were:

WSP Prescribed wetlands

Aboriginal water

Parliamentary inquiry into minimum inflows

Addresses from: Steph Cooke MP, Shadow Water Minister; Senator Perin Davey; Andrew McConville, CEO MDBA.

**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

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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

Electrofishing carp update

On 17 January, Dr. John Conallin and Dan Hutton conducted carp electrofishing as an extension of the ROAR Refreshing Rivers project and Murray LLS Invasive Species program. Carp were measured and removed, and native fish were released. There were so many native fish in certain areas that John noted they had to stop electrofishing! Key highlights included:

- 25 golden perch were caught and safely released. Some small golden perch were sighted, likely from the January 2024 fingerling release.
- 30 Murray cod were caught and released, including some smaller ones, along with a few silver perch—one even had a hook in its mouth!

Further updates on carp removal will be shared following three more electrofishing events planned for March, April and May 2025.



Photo: Electrofishing with the planted (2023) tall spike rush in the foreground.

Releasing eel-tailed catfish 2025

We are releasing our second batch of eel-tailed catfish on 2 April to help boost local populations at Jerilderie and Conargo. Catfish were once abundant locally, as many locals recall, but are now a NSW Endangered Population. Alongside removing carp for better native fish recruitment and planting aquatic vegetation, the Refreshing Rivers Program is hoping this multi-pronged approach will ensure the best outcome for our native fish.

If you would like to come along for the catfish release or find out more contact Andrea E: env@yactac.org.au OR M: 0419 841 834



Photo: Last planting event for 2024 with Finley HS, Billabong Creek Jerilderie