



# Newsletter

## President - Bob Crawford

The Top section and therefore the Middle and Lower sections of the Yanco Colombo System (YCS) are still exposed to a possible malevolent operation of the proposed regulator and all sections are equally negatively exposed to the outcomes proposed in the second SDL project. YACTAC is endeavouring to have suitable Rules and Regulations written to not diminish the needs of the YCS community.

YACTAC is heartened by your interest and passion helping achieve a better result than that proposed.

The Water Sharing Plan and the specific SDL outcomes, Rules and Regulations need to not endanger our creek system. Perin Davey of PD Strategy has worked with us to compose our a submission to the Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plan (M'gee WSP) review by DoI Water - Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP). The M'gee WSP is full of intra and inter valley property rights. It is a labyrinth of arguments and past decisions that give WaterNSW lead carriage of the review and DoI Water has the final say on what becomes the M'gee WSP. Past Agreements are rigidly adhered too. Although incongruously the NSW Water bureaucracy seems intent on harming the YCS.

YACTAC has proposed a 300ML/day continuous flow requirement at the offtake to meet the essentials of our peoples and the environment, in all but the most extreme circumstances.

To help achieve this outcome and to repair and maintain the system a Natural Resource Project Manager is needed. YACTAC hopes to advertise this position soon and have a suitable person on the ground pronto. YACTAC wants to engage with the universities, professional firms and interested parties to prove the worthiness of our system in order to receive CEWH waters and maintain essential flows. I value your support in helping all of us achieve our common goals.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss anything.

## Membership

YACTAC members in attendance at the Annual General Meeting voted on the 2018/19 membership fee and given the increased level of activity, because of the many changes in government policy and reforms, it was decided to increase the annual membership fee for landholders to \$550 including GST.

Due to community attendance at the Annual General Meeting there were a number of people who wanted to join YACTAC that don't own a Water Access License. An associate membership was created to cater for interested persons. The membership fee is \$10 including GST, per annum from 1 July 2018. Associate members will receive email correspondence about YACTAC's activities and have access to speak to the executive about any concerns they may have.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President Message.....	1
Membership.....	1
Board Casual Vacancy .....	2
NRMP Review.....	2
Executive Officer .....	2
Murrumbidgee EWARG.....	2
WaterNSW LOS .....	2
Spreading the Message.....	2
DoI Water SDL.....	3
Supplementary Access .....	3
Henty Field Days .....	3
NSWIC .....	3
SAP .....	3
WaterNSW CAG .....	3
YACTAC Website.....	3
OEH Visit .....	4
CEWO .....	4

### EMAIL OPTION

- Would you prefer to receive this newsletter via email to take advantage of the links to additional information?
- Please contact Tanya on **0408 833 801**

## **Murrumbidgee Environmental Water Allowance Reference Group - MEWARG**

Watering events since March 2018

- MIA Wetlands—Tuckerbill Swamp
- Sandy Creek
- Toogimbie wetlands
- Nimmie-Caira - SBF refuge flows
- Nimmie Creek to Nap Nap Swamp

Basin Plan—Fish Outcomes

- No loss of native species
- Improved population structure
- Increased movement
- Expanded distribution

The next meeting will be in early October at Balranald.

### **WaterNSW Levels of Service**

Levels of Service (LOS) is the new terminology used for customer service. Essentially the process is for WaterNSW to:

- identify the LOS needed and any gaps,
- develop solutions - broader scope including asset and non-build options,
- Key outcome - long term strategy (7-20 yrs)

Meetings are being held with stakeholders to discuss options and then build cost structures around those options.

### **Spreading the Message**

Communications sent to:

Niall Blair  
Sussan Ley  
Austin Evans  
DoI Water

Articles in:

The Argus  
Southern Riverina News  
Pastoral Times  
The Land

Radio:

ABC Riverina

and many others.

## **Board Casual Vacancy**

Following the constitution, Glen Baxter was appointed to fill the casual vacancy due to Sam Trinca's resignation. Glen will fill this position until the next election period. We welcome Glen onto the Board and look forward to working with him over the coming years.

## **NRMP Review**

Bob Laing presented his report and sought feedback from the attendees. Whilst the review and presentation was a key element of the AGM it was somewhat overshadowed by the feeling in the room of discontent towards the proposed Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL's) Adjustment Mechanism, which was discussed prior to this presentation. It was decided to focus on the current SDL situation at the present time.

The topic of YACTAC's future will be revisited again. In the meantime members are requested to consider the following options which include:

- Continue YACTAC in its present form, or
- Continue YACTAC with improvements/changes, or
- Continue YACTAC but change its direction, or
- Conclude that YACTAC has served its purpose and does not have a future.

## **Executive Office - Tanya Thompson**

I would like to thank the guest speakers who presented at our Annual General Meeting: MDBA - Colin Mues, OEH - Jo Lenehan, DOI Fisheries - Luke Pearce, Yakuwa - Jeanette Crew, NSWIC - Mark McKenzie. I would also like to thank Bob Laing for compiling and presenting the NRMP review.

It would be fair to say there were more questions than answers on the day and a significant increase in communication transpired after the AGM. Information has been emailed to members to increase the awareness of proposed significant changes which could affect the YCS. These proposed changes are:

- Water meters reverting back to private ownership
- Two SDL projects
- Water Resource Plans
- OEH Long Term Watering Plans.

The winter newsletter had information on water meters and SDL projects, under the heading NSW Irrigators Council. Additional information will be covered in this newsletter.

Considerable effort is being made to ensure key personnel know about the YCS. Ministers, bureaucrats, NSW and Federal government employees are all being approached about the concerns of the people living and working in our footprint.

*Jeanette Crew presenting at the 39th Annual General Meeting Conargo.*



## DoI Water - SDL

Our creek system is threatened by two SDL projects being put forward to satisfy Murray Darling Basin Requirements.

- Improved Flow Mgmt Works at Murrumbidgee Rivers Yanco Creek Offtake (Regulator)
- Modernising Supply Systems for Effluent Creeks

Summaries of the preliminary business cases are available if requested and the full versions are available on our website.

The Regulator is targeting 10GL (\$50m) and the Effluent Creeks an additional 14.4GL (\$32 m), which could drastically reduce the volume of water in the creek system. These proposals could change the creek system into something more like an irrigation supply channel. "The development of any environmental watering strategy does not form part of this business case, which focuses solely on achieving water savings from enhanced efficiency in delivery systems." Effluent Creeks Business Case page 2.

The current volume of water running through the creek system will be reduced. WaterNSW is developing strategies to ensure the system is more efficient. In the future it appears that most water in the system will need to be debited from an account: either irrigator, OEH or other.

YACTAC is vocal about these changes and consistently emphasis the YCS is a creek system with unique aquatic, wetland and riparian assets; not an irrigation channel!

## Supplementary Access

Some members have expressed concerns about access to future supplementary flows if the SDL projects are implemented. At the SAP meeting on 9 August this topic was discussed, with the following outcome: Supplementary access to be shared in a equitable and transparent manner amongst all water users. To be managed by the WaterNSW CAG and noted that issues can be escalated if needed. The **Water Sharing Plan** specifies equity of supplementary access in clause 69(3):

"The taking of water under supplementary water access licences and supplementary water (Lowbidgee) access licences should, as far as possible, be managed to evenly share access opportunity between all supplementary water access licence holders and supplementary water (Lowbidgee) access licence holders permitted to access that event in accordance with the rules in this clause".

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2016-367.pdf>

## Henty Field Days

YACTAC will be hosting a display in the Landcare Pavilion. Please drop in whilst you are there. We hope to have someone available to speak to you about YACTAC and obtain your feedback. Tuesday 18 to Thursday 20 September.

## NSWIC

Mark McKenzie (CEO) gave significant notice of his departure and he has been replaced by Luke Simpkins. Luke has hit the ground running and wants to develop media telling good stories about irrigators. We think our footprint could be a perfect fit, so we will be pursuing this with Luke.

The next meeting is in November and elections will be held for committee positions.



## Stakeholders

### Advisory Panel – SAP

The last 2 day SAP meeting clashed with our AGM, however YACTAC was represented on the 9 August.

#### •Yanco Dealing Limit

DoI Water's position that delivery rights will not be implemented in the near future and no current intention to amend the Yanco Dealing Limit in the WSP.

#### •Supplementary Access

See item.

#### •End of System Flow

Retention of the existing Billabong Creek end of system flow target. Targets within the valley are not to be combined.

#### •Inter Valley Trades

#### •Transparency and Translucency Rules

## WaterNSW CAG

The next round of meetings will be held on Tuesday 18 September.

Topics on the agenda are:

- Water delivery
- System operation and asset services update
- Drought response
- Regulatory update
- Pricing determinations
- Voice of customer
- Various updates

## YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

<https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/yanco-creek-and-tributaries-advisory-council>

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

Kyomie Park  
16457 Riverina Hwy  
FINLEY NSW 2713

t: 03 5883 3830

m: 0408 833 801

e: yactac.tanya@outlook.com

**Top Section Committee:**

Geoff Ham 0427 942 336  
Lawrence Simpson 0448 189 001  
Glen Baxter 0428 852 623

**Middle Section Committee:**

Sam Armytage 0427 534 622  
Russell Ford 0429 425 798  
Mark Wettenhall 0427 861 825

**Bottom Section Committee:**

Bob Crawford 0427 875 955  
Sally Dye 0427 875 940  
Colin McCrabb 0428 847 558

**Executive Officer**

Tanya Thompson 0408 833 801

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.



## OEH visit to Wilsons Anabranh

Jo Lenehan (OEH) presented at the AGM and returned to visit Wilsons Anabranh and surrounding areas. Gwen McLaughlin, Russell Ford, Jamie Wilson, along with Caroline and Craig Heath were tour leaders and key fact experts.

First stop was the Wilson Anabranh regulator to discuss operating conditions in relation to potential future environmental water delivery, and the impact of recent hydrological changes, including red gum sapling encroachment into the bed of the creek.

Russell Ford and Jamie Williams helped install a ratings gauge plate and time lapse camera at the regulator, which we will use to estimate the commence to flow height of the channel in relation to Wiraki section of the Yanco Creek.

The tour ended at the colonial waterbird breeding lagoon at the end of the anabranh known locally as Gwen's Lagoon. Old heron and cormorant nests were still evident from the 2016 flooding, as were the remains of stranded fish. Flood markers indicate this section of the anabranh can hold water for extended periods (6 to 12 months) to support a range of water-dependent species including waterbirds - but it is



*Juvenile wedge-tailed eagle  
Photo Craig & Caroline Heath*

the validated records of birds of prey, such as letter-winged kite, osprey, white-bellied sea-eagle, little eagle, brown goshawk, collared sparrowhawk, spotted harrier, and the rarely seen black falcon, which has caught the eye of Jo Lenehan.

It is hoped that with tours like this one a better understanding of our assets will be developed, which will enable our voices to resinate louder and lead to improved outcomes for the ecology and community.



*This is a scene we don't want to see. Fish stranded because of dried out areas on the YCS.*

## CEWO

Major watering actions in 2017/18 included:

*Mid Murrumbidgee Wetland Reconnection (+77422ML NSW AEW/EWA)	161,035ML
*North Redbank Refuge flows	5,528ML
*Nimmie-Caira Refuge (+8300ML NSW AEW)	5,000ML
*Waldaira Lagoon	1,500ML
*Toogimble IPA	1,000ML
*Coonancoocabil Lagoon	900ML
*Additional various sites	

**Total CEWO water delivered in 2017/18** **176,761ML**  
Lowbidgee supplementary 1,738ML