



# Newsletter

## President - Bob Crawford

There has been increased activity in recent months as there has never been a time when so many changes and risks have been present. Both Mark Wettenhall and I have attended government held meetings and personally approached members of the NSW and Federal parliaments to ensure the YCS is known to them and they understand the concerns of our members and the community. Gwen McLaughlin, Helene Mortlock and Jim Muirhead have also volunteered many hours to be the voice of the local community. The combination of all these efforts were evidenced by the huge attendance at the DoI-Water meetings in Conargo and Jerilderie.

For a long time YACTAC has called for a comprehensive review of the two SDLAM 2015 preliminary business cases. Minister Blair is now listening and DoI-Water is undertaking that review and rewriting the business cases based on new modelling. I would like to thank every member of our community for their help in achieving this outcome.

YACTAC is working collaboratively with DoI-Water in developing minimum flow regimes for each section of the Yanco Colombo System (YCS) that satisfies critical needs and incorporate those minimum flows into Water Sharing Plan amendment and 2024 reconciliation of the SDLAM measures.

If each member could carefully consider their minimum "needs" they expect to be satisfied from a flow in each section of the system and convey their "claim" to the YACTAC Executive Officer, delegates would be empowered to make a powerful argument for a minimum flow regime.

Ashley Senn, Senior Planner for DoI-Water, toured the Bottom section of the YCS recently. We started at the confluence of the YCS and the Edward River, at Moulamein, with the tour proceeding 40 km upstream to the Darlot telemetry site. This site measures the "End of System" flow. The YACTAC Board feel its location is inappropriate for taking these measurements and efforts are being made to install another telemetry site closer to Moulamein.

The tour also visited the now dry Wanganella Swamp, near the Hay/Deniliquin Road, and proposals to develop a public/private partnership to water this particular section were discussed. The tour ended exploring the Hartwood weir for a possible upgrade project that could involve a new O/Top dam structure with appropriate regulation gates. Local needs along the Forest Creek section will need to be carefully assessed prior to any detailed plans being developed.

## Natural Resource Manager

Dale McNeil has been contracted, on a part time basis, to manage and drive the environmental aspects of YACTAC. Dale lives in Deniliquin, has over 20 years experience delivering environmental and Natural Resource Management projects and has a detailed understanding of river and creek systems. Dale will be updating the Natural Resource Management Plan, managing all aspects of environmental work, sourcing grant funding, building relationships with landholders/community and representing YACTAC. Dale will be undertaking a tour of the system in the future and I am sure you will make him feel welcome.



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### 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**

### **Spring waterbird survey -**

Total waterbird abundance was low across the Lowbidgee Floodplain and Mid-Murrumbidgee Wetlands reflecting the very dry conditions.

The **Murrumbidgee Long Term Watering Plan** was presented with key objectives for native fish, native vegetation, waterbird, frog, priority ecosystem function along timeline targets of 5 yrs, 10 yrs and 20 year milestones.

### **2018/19 Annual Env Watering Priorities - click [Here](#)**

#### **Yanga Lake Watering Event and Short Term Intervention Monitoring**

- To provide a better understanding of how fish use the floodplain.
- How can environmental floodplain flows be managed better to limit recruitment of carp etc?
- Report due August 2019

#### **IPART—Rural Cost Shares Review**

WAMC and WaterNSW charge structures are being reviewed. Aither has completed a draft report that suggests keeping the cost sharing framework that is currently in place, which is on an activity basis, rather than move to a service based cost share framework.

#### **Spreading the Message**

Meetings with:  
David Littleproud  
Katrina Hodgkinson  
Michael McCormack  
Sussan Ley  
Austin Evans  
NSWIC—Luke Simpkins  
DoI Water—Tracey MacDonald,  
David Leslie

Articles in:  
The Argus  
Southern Riverina News  
Pastoral Times  
The Land  
The Weekly Times

Radio:  
ABC Riverina

and many others.

## **Executive Officer - Tanya Thompson**

In October last year YACTAC hosted a tour of the upper and middle sections which firmly demonstrated the concerns of the community and members. Representatives from MDBA Eco Hydrology Environmental Management Division, OEH, Murray LLS, DoI-Water, Jerilderie indigenous and the community attended. A submission was then presented to MDBA detailing the concerns about the SDLAM Yanco Regulator project.

More recently YACTAC Board members Bob Crawford and Mark Wettenhall along with community members Gwen McLaughlin, Helene Mortlock, Jim Muirhead and others have pushed to get the Yanco Creek system in the spotlight. As such YACTAC has been involved in a series of meetings held with government departments, ministers and bureaucrats over the previous few months. The increase of awareness and activism of members and the public, in addition to the media campaign on radio, newspapers and social media caught the attention of Minister Niall Blair. At last the Yanco Creek system was being talked about and our concerns acknowledged.

The combination of submissions, continued lobbying over a long period of time, increased media attention and community angst has enabled our combined voices to be heard. The minister appointed a new division in the Department of Industry - Water to coordinate the NSW SDL Projects, which is headed by Tracey MacDonald in Newcastle. At a local level David Leslie is now working as Principal Project Officer, DoI-Water. YACTAC has been working closely with David to ensure local knowledge and needs are being taken into consideration.

YACTAC has been represented in Canberra, Sydney, Deniliquin, Jerilderie, Conargo, Griffith and Balranald. Be assured that members are being well represented and the concerns of members is being voiced.

With the NSW elections approaching government departments will go into caretaker mode, so the next few months will not see as many opportunities for representation. However the YACTAC office and committee will still be seeking opportunities to further develop agreeable outcomes.

## **Water Resource Plans - WRP**

Whilst a number of WRPs are publicly released the Murrumbidgee and Murray are still in development. Once they are released there will be a 40 day consultation period where public meetings will be held.

Water Sharing Plans (WSP) are still being reviewed and developed. It is the rules in the WSP that will govern access to water with those rules being under the umbrella of the MDBP. The WSP rules need to be developed to achieve the targets for the SDLAM projects. Once the WSPs are drafted the MDBA will review them.

## **Creek Country Alliance**

The Creek Country Alliance has been very active in the community and voicing the concerns of the community to an array of media, government and other organisations. They have signage around the major roads leading into Jerilderie and a facebook page for sharing stories. Search Creek Country Alliance on facebook and you will find them. Gwen McLaughlin, Helene Mortlock and Jim Muirhead can be contacted to discuss community concerns and ideas.



## DoI Water - SDLAM

In May 2017 a meeting was held in Jerilderie to discuss SDLAM projects, then silence until the first week in December. Two community meetings were held (Conargo 4 Dec and Jerilderie 5 December) and a number of closed meetings: YACTAC, councils, Creek Country Alliance, Irrigation Corporations, indigenous representatives etc. The same presentation was made at all the meetings and participants were given time for feedback. Tracey MacDonald opened the meetings and discussed the process SDLAM projects must go through before being approved.

As mentioned previously YACTAC is in discussions with DoI-Water Principal Project Officer, David Leslie. For the first time we feel that we have someone who knows our footprint and is going to work diligently to try and achieve an outcome that takes into consideration YACTAC members and community concerns. Hopefully a 'win/win' outcome will be achieved. This is so much better than anything we have been involved in previously. YACTAC pushed for a review/rewrite of the preliminary business cases and this is what is being offered.

However the work has just begun as timelines are tight and the project detail expansive.

We are currently in negotiations on how to best facilitate communications and member feedback.

## Stakeholders Advisory Panel—SAP

In the last two meetings irrigation corporations have expressed their views that the YCS is inefficient and the End of System flows above 50ML/day are seen as a lost opportunity for other irrigators in the Murrumbidgee Valley.

Together with these sentiments are the requests put forward by irrigation corporations to: consider whether the Yanco Dealing Limit on entitlement trade should be extended to include allocation trade (restriction on temporary water transfer into the YCS); and their support for the broad concept of delivery rights on the Yanco to be progressed at a state level. You can make your own assumptions about the irrigation corporations actions. DoI-Water's legal team are investigating.

## Creek Weed Control

Central Murray County Council, Matt Wooden, has been engaged to undertake a program of spraying weeds. Spraying on the Colombo Creek has been completed. Work has also been undertaken on the Forest Creek and sections of the Billabong Creek. Last week spraying on the Yanco upstream of Wilson Road was commenced. There has been good results with old infestations and some new areas have been discovered. The weed infestations are at a controlling stage which is a good outcome.



## YACTAC Priorities

These are the objectives YACTAC is striving for:

- Base line environmental flows throughout the whole system.
- End of System flows not to be deemed as losses - flows benefit the environment.
- 80% of regulated water flows enter from the Top end.
- Reduced order times with a flexible system to assist river operations.
- Minimal increase in delivery costs over the long term.

## Stakeholders

### Advisory Panel – SAP

- Incident Response Guide
- PPM—no information on YCS yet available.
- WRP v WSP
- Cultural Water

Actions to be answered at next meeting:

- DoI Water reviewing Yanco Dealing Limit to include allocation trade.
- Review limit at Yanco Creek offtake.
- WaterNSW to present update on supplementary access

More information available upon request.

### WaterNSW CAG

- WaterNSW is pushing for the new cost structure to be:  
20% Govt: 80 % customer
- No supplementary access this season.
- No likely increase in allocation.
- Operational losses blamed on order rejections.
- If continued low rainfall occurs WaterNSW may recommend Critical Events (Drought) WSP Policy Stage 2 Status in the new year.

### YACTAC Website

Google: landcare YACTAC

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

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

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**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
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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.



## OEH - Wetland Watering Plans

Anthony (Rex) Conallin is now engaged as the Assistant Environmental Water Manager and will be undertaking a liaison role with riparian land holders. Most people will know Rex and it is great to have him as a point of contact.

James Maguire and his team are undertaking a 'Whole of System' watering review and are keen to hear from anyone who has an interest in watering environmental areas on their

properties or areas near their properties. They are currently in the planning phase, so now is the time to get in contact with them. Negotiations are underway to water Wanganella Swamp. Rex is available for on-site visits to review locations and discuss options for watering sites. Rex - 0428 105 889.



*Piccanniny Creek*

## Metering

Dol-Water acknowledged the following feedback about changes to metering:

- Timelines for staged roll out too short – not enough contractors
- Reliability and cost of telemetry too high for small users
- Calls for small entitlement holders to be exempt or lower standards
- Concern about costs
- Concern about practicality of standards for portable pumps
- **State owned meters being changed to private ownership should not occur.**

### Outcome - Telemetry

- Telemetry only required for surface water works 200mm or larger
- No telemetry for ground water
- Issue will be revisited as part of the 5 year review
- All new and replacement meters must be telemetry capable AS4747 and have data loggers
- Water users can still be directed to have telemetry installed under s326 of the Water Management Act
- Water users without telemetry will need to regularly report take. Portable pumps will need to meet the same requirements as other meters.

### Further work in 2019

- **Resolving ownership of government owned meters**
- Reporting requirements for users with meters below thresholds
- Reasonable use guidelines for stock and domestic.

## NSWIC

Luke Simpkins is the new CEO for NSWIC. Luke visited Jerilderie in November and was taken on a quick tour by Mark Wettenhall. Luke gained an understanding of YACTAC's footprint and the issues currently being faced. Luke and others are going to return on 1 February for a more extensive tour and we will once again have the opportunity to get our message across.

### AGM - newly elected directors

Brendan Barry, Jim Crush (Chair), Rachel Kelly, Tim Napier (re-elected).

Membership of the NSWIC informs YACTAC of the vast array of developing government changes that will directly affect members. It also enables YACTAC to have a platform to ensure those government departments are aware of the Yanco Colombo System and the importance of it both economically and environmentally.