

Rural Customer Update

Season closure and next season forecast



Lining of brine lagoons at Bendigo Recycled Water Factory earlier this month.

The season allocation for 2007-2008 was 35%. We opened the season with a 30% allocation and then offered an additional 5%.

The outlook for next season is not as good. At this point in time we are completely reliant on winter and spring inflows to allow us to have a rural season allocation for 2008-2009. A restricted season is currently the most likely scenario in 2008/09.

Whilst the Goldfields Superpipe and the availability of recycled water to some rural customers has increased our available water, we still require good inflows to improve the season outlook.

Projects update

The Goldfields Superpipe will continue to deliver water from the Goulburn System until the end of the 2007-2008 Goulburn Murray Water season. This water will be stored in Lake Eppalock, and then transferred to Sandhurst Reservoir in Bendigo as required.

The Reverse Osmosis treatment plant at the Bendigo Recycled Water Factory is currently being commissioned. This additional treatment will improve the recycled water to better than Class A quality to make it suitable for long-term use.

The original Water Plan 2008-2013 submission included \$40 million over 5 years for the Rural Reconfiguration Project. The pricing regulator (Essential Services Commission) has made a draft determination to defer expenditure of \$20 million into the next water plan. This means \$20M is currently allocated for the reconfiguration. The final determination will be made in June.

Recycled Water - Rural Customers

The Ascot, Huntly, Goornong, White Hills, Ellesmere, Axe Creek and Kangaroo Channels were all supplied with recycled water this season. We have 211 rural licences on these channels of which 172 customers have had their Site Management Plans for use of recycled water approved.

In March 2008, we reviewed the balance of recycled water in Spring Gully Reservoir, together with the production from the Bendigo Recycled Water Factory. Based on the evaluation we were able to offer additional recycled water to eligible customers. This opportunity was taken up by 46 customers who took delivery of up to 100% of their allocation.

Water Trading - Season 2007/2008

Water Trading for season 2007/08 has been active. The table below details the number of applications processed for both permanent and temporary water transfers within the Coliban Water Rural System.

	Applications Processed	Volume of Water Traded
Permanent Transfers	54	252 ML
Temporary Transfers	215	839 ML

Coliban Water

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Bendigo DC
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Tel: 1300 363 200
coliban@coliban.com.au

Please let us know what information you would like to see in future issues.

Call Frank or Carmel on 1300 363 200.



Channel maintenance works.

Faults and Service Difficulties

All faults or service difficulties (other than orders) should be directed through our Customer Contact Centre on: 1300 363 200.

This will ensure a prompt response, and avoid delayed response when baliffs are off-duty or out of mobile range and do not get your message straight away.

Rural Reconfiguration Project

The information supplied by the consultants for the Cockatoo Hill system and Ascot/Axe Creek systems is currently being revisited and a variety of options are being considered.

Due to the complexity of the Harcourt system, it was decided to utilise the skills within Coliban Water and investigate options for the 'concept' design. Five options have been considered, resulting in three options being identified for further investigation.

The next Water Plan which sets out our program of expenditure for 2008-2013 commences 1 July 2008. During this time we will be progressing the reconfiguration project.

Over the coming months we will be developing a section of the Coliban Water website specifically for information on the Rural Reconfiguration Project and how it is progressing.

Rural System News

Water Harvesting from Channels

Generally, customers can request to have outlet/s open during the off-season to harvest water from Coliban's channels. Due to the ongoing drought and low levels in our storages, this year Coliban Water will be harvesting all water from channels that flow to reservoirs. Outlets on the following channels **will not** be opened:

- Coliban Main
- Cockatoo Hill
- Harcourt Main
- Raywood
- Specimen Hill
- Lockwood up to outlet 113

If you require your outlet opened for winter harvest, contact the Contact Centre on 1300 363 200 or email coliban@coliban.com.au.

You will need to advise your Licence Number, Channel Name and the Outlet Number(s) you require to be opened.

State Government Drought Assistance Package

As advised in the last newsletter, on 24 October 2007 the State Government announced a new drought assistance package. This assistance was in the form of a rebate to assist with the fixed charges for all irrigators and stock and domestic customers on systems that received less than 40% of water allocation at 1 December 2007.

The necessary adjustments were made on the accounts issued at the end of December 2007.

There is no indication at this stage whether this rebate will be offered in 2008/09.

Easements

Easements were one of the topics at the last Customer Advisory Group meeting. Attached is a fact sheet. This information is also available on our website.

Rural Customer Advisory Group (CAG)

What is the CAG?

The role of the Rural CAG is to provide advise on rural customer issues and to provide input to major Coliban Water initiatives.

Current Membership:

Paul Mannes	Tobias Ansted
John Vercoe	Malcolm Burrows
Vicky Gaudion	Brian Stephens
Peter Mazur	Mark Browne

Since our last newsletter we have welcomed two new members, Brian Stephens and Mark Browne. We have also farewelled two members, Kerry Lorenz and Jennifer Goddard. We thank them for their commitment and input while members of the Rural CAG.

Free Smart Gardens Publication

Are you wondering about what plants are best to survive our dry climate?

Coliban Water, in conjunction with City of Greater Bendigo and Department of Primary Industries have updated our well known publication 'Smart Gardens for a Dry Climate'.

The publication can be downloaded from our website - www.coliban.com.au, just click on the link to Smart Gardens.

Hard copies are available from Coliban Water, 37-45 Bridge Street Bendigo, or call us on 1300 363 200 and request for a copy to be mailed.