



Western Murray Irrigation Ltd

Newsletter

April 2020

From the CEO: COVID-19 WMI response

As you know the COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly transformed Australian life and business activity.

WMI's services (supply and distribution of water) are considered essential under the Essential Services Act 1988 (NSW) and so we continue to operate 'business as usual' but with changes to our business operations to ensure the health and safety of our staff, customers and the community.

The changes to our business operations include:

- Office and depot closed to customers/public until further notice;
- Physical distancing;
- Separation of work groups;
- Good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene; and
- Cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas regularly.

Customer service will be conducted remotely through phone, electronic or postal means. Please phone or email the office for the most appropriate way to meet your needs.

Operations (including the meter upgrade and telemetry project) and regular infrastructure maintenance will continue.

If you do meet with our staff or contractors, please follow the physical distancing and good hygiene government guidelines.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Third quarter invoice payment due

The third quarter invoice for 2019/20 will be soon available.

We are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected livelihoods and businesses. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the office before the due date for information on how we can assist you.

From the (new) Chair



David Whitbread (at home in Walker Flat, Murray River, South Australia)

I am delighted to have been appointed an independent Director and Chair of Western Murray Irrigation Limited (WMI) in February.

As a Chartered Accountant, with a background in Accounting, Tax and Finance, I retired as a Partner and Board member of Deloitte Australia in 2008, having been with them and their antecedent firms since 1977, and a Partner since 1981.

In January 1990, on the inception of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, I was appointed Chairman of the SA State office, which I established.

Third quarter Invoice 2019/20
due for payment:

4.30pm
on
29 May 2020

On-call Officer
24 hours/365 days
Ph: 0428 596 428

Office hours: 9:00am to 4:30pm
Monday to Friday, ex. public holidays

Contact us:
T: (03) 5027 4953
F: (03) 5027 4880

www: westernmurray.com.au
E: enquiries@westernmurray.com.au

Office & depot closed to public
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Upcoming NSW Public Holiday
Queen's Birthday
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I am passionate about the value that a properly constituted Board can bring to an organisation and have acted as a Chairman and Finance Director of several large organisations here in Australia and New Zealand.

I have also been proud to work with a number of family-owned vineyards and wine businesses including South Australian based Mitolo Group and Woodstock Wines.

My due diligence on WMI revealed a high level of compliance to good corporate governance principals, and now having met all Board members, the executive team and most of the staff, I believe the company and business is in good hands.

Special thanks to our previous Chair, Kevin Watson, for a smooth handover.

I look forward to working with the WMI team for the betterment of all customers, shareholders, staff and other stakeholders.

Discovery of illegal works

WMI has been contacted by several shareholders in relation to speculation about the discovery of illegal works tapping into a WMI pipeline.

WMI uses a number of techniques, such as analysis of historical water ordering and usage patterns and ground-penetrating radar, to identify such behaviour.

As a result, we can confirm that illegal works tapping into a WMI pipeline were discovered recently.

WMI regards interference with our water management works and taking water without lawful authority as very serious matters.

It is a criminal offence under the *Water Management Act 2000* (NSW) to:

- destroy, damage or interfere with, or to deposit anything in, WMI's water management works without lawful authority; or
- take water from any water supply work that is owned by, or under the control and management of WMI, without lawful authority.

The maximum penalty for each of the above offences is \$2,002,000 and a further \$132,000 for each day the offence continues.

WMI has reported the circumstances of which it is aware to the NSW Natural Resource Access Regulator for its consideration as to whether criminal offences have been committed and for any appropriate prosecutorial action to be taken as a consequence. In addition, WMI has reserved its own right to commence prosecutions against any responsible persons if it forms the view that offences have been committed.

In the meantime, the customers concerned have been notified that they have committed events of default under their contracts with WMI. As a result, WMI suspended all water deliveries to these customers and required the customers concerned to account for the water taken and delivery charges, among other things.

WMI's investigations into these matters are continuing.

Metering & Telemetry project update

WMI continues the installation of new meters and telemetry units at eligible sites. Over 90% of Coomealla meters are now installed.

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Pre-installation works are also being carried out in Curlwaa, with installation expected to commence 11 May 2020.



Correction: Thanks to Ian Murdoch who voluntarily pulled some vines and posts to assist the installation process.

Curlwaa & Coomealla generators put to good use

WMI participated in the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Reliability and Emergency Reserve Trader (RERT) scheme during the 2019/20 summer period for the first time. The scheme enables AEMO to maintain power system reliability and system security using reserve contracts.

WMI was called to participate on Friday 31 January 2020 between 5:30pm and 8:30pm to assist maintain Victoria's power system reliability. Both Curlwaa and Coomealla generators were turned on to reduce the demand for power whilst maintaining full service to those pump stations and customers' irrigation requirements.



Coomealla generators running during very hot and dusty conditions late on Friday 31 January 2020.

The exercise was successful and WMI is expecting to receive close to \$42,000 as payment for participating.

WMI continues to investigate the feasibility for a generator at Buronga pump station.

End of year surplus allocation water trade

Customers are strongly encouraged to undertake their own individual trade up to the WMI cut-off date of 10am Friday 26 June 2020 to maximise returns.

WMI will however endeavour to trade a proportion of surplus allocation remaining after 10am on 26 June 2020 if economical and practical to do so with acquittal into eligible customer accounts in accordance with the model implemented in the previous seasons.

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Additional Water Fee reminder

Water usage above allocation is billed quarterly at \$1,200/ML.

Please ensure you **always have a positive water allocation in your account**, in order to meet your needs for the current irrigation season.

Customers should contact the office staff for more information or assistance.

Indicative opening allocations on 1 July 2020

NSW DPIE Water has conservatively based the outlook for 1 July opening water allocations on assumed very dry inflows for the remainder of this water year and extreme dry conditions for 2020-21.

It is forecast that NSW Murray high security allocation of 97 percent will be met on 1 July, and general security allocations will be low or zero. Carryover commitments will also be met.

The good news is that the Menindee Lakes System is rising as northern basin inflows continue and is forecast to rise to around 20 percent by the end of April. The inflows have been enough to safely re-start the Lower Darling river and should be sufficient to run the river for at least 12 months, probably longer.

Blue Green Algae Alerts

WaterNSW provides algal alerts on their website: www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae.

The amber alerts continue (as at 23 April 2020) but it is advisable to check the alerts regularly as algal concentrations can change rapidly.

Blue Green Algae updates are also provided on the WMI website and customers are sent SMS notifications. To receive SMS notifications directly to your phone please ensure we have your correct mobile number by calling the office on 5027 4953 or emailing enquiries@westernmurray.com.au

Surface drainage maintenance

WMI has been busy ensuring the surface drainage network is in good operating condition. This includes general clearing, structural integrity and targeted weedicide application during favourable conditions.

Drainage around Hollands Lake Rd (Coomoella) being cleared in Feb/March



April: Targeted weedicide application occurs during favourable conditions with the low-level spraying applicator

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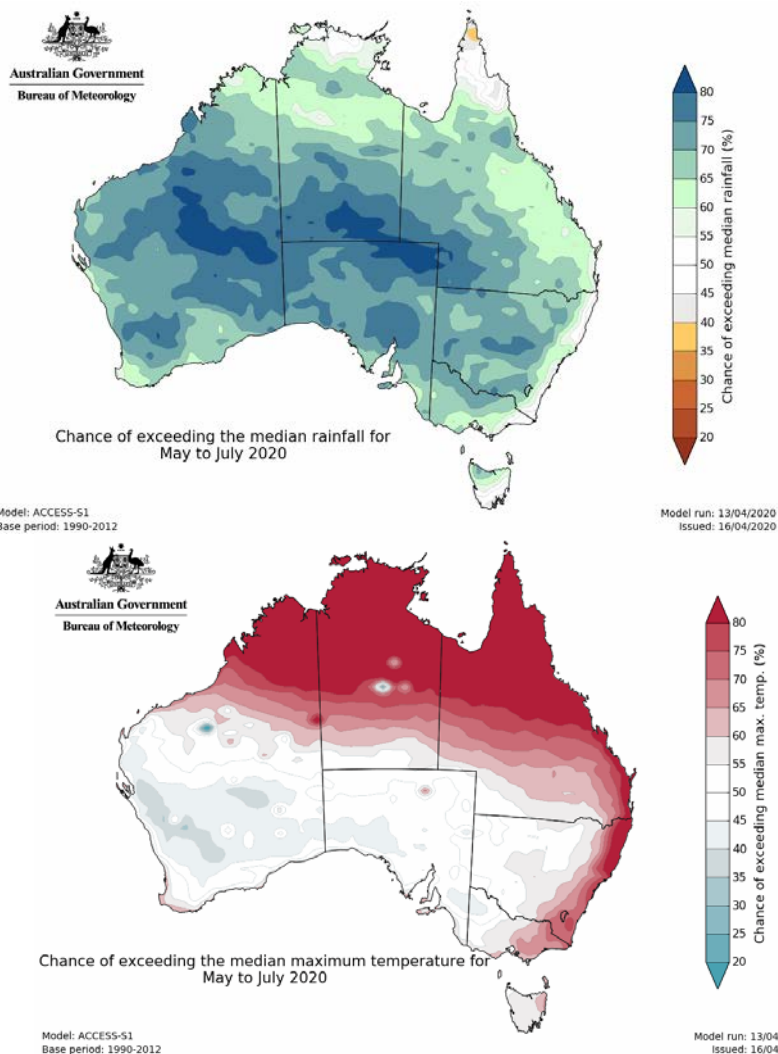
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Climate Outlook: May to July 2020

The Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting wetter than average conditions for most of Australia, and average temperatures for much of the southern mainland:



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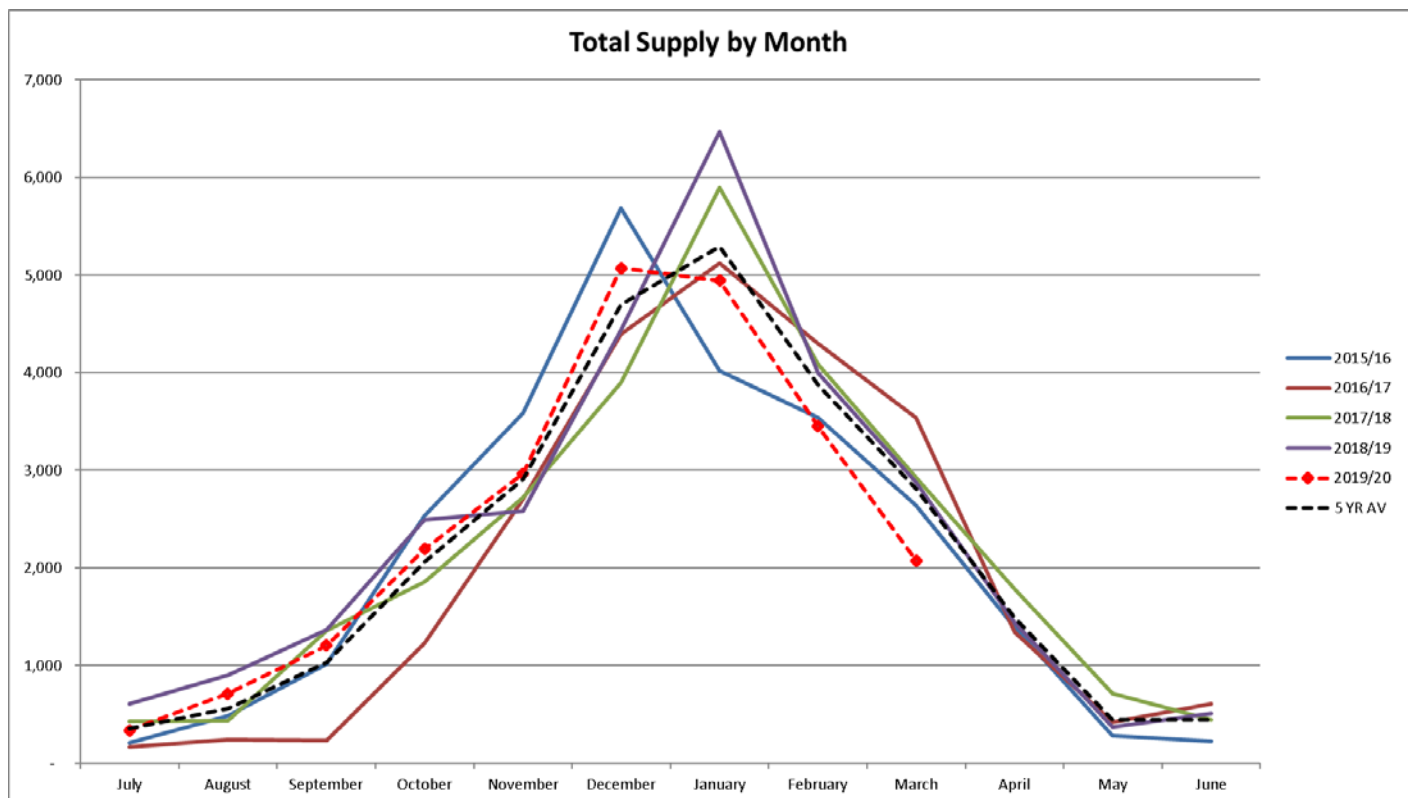
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January 2020

Total Water Pumped over 5 Years



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