



# Newsletter

April 2023

## From the CEO

The new NSW Premier Chris Minns, having been sworn in on 28 March, hit the ground running with a visit to Menindee the following day. The Premier confirmed the NSW Labor Government's commitment to an independent review into mass fish deaths and water management in the state.

The Hon Rose Jackson MLC, appointed NSW Water Minister (amongst other things), will be the 4<sup>th</sup> Water Minister in the last 5 years.

### New 2023/24 charges

WMI continues to work with customers in preparing for the introduction of the new charges on 1 July 2023.

To date, there has been a total of 2,646 Delivery Entitlement's (DE's) terminated under the 80% discount offer (BGA 370; CMA 1,364; CWA 912).

The WMI Board will soon begin to review a draft 2023/24 Budget and its corresponding fees and charges ultimately leading to a new schedule of charges to be announced in June.

Once approved by the Board, customers will also receive updated customer agreements in early May. Customer agreements (Water Delivery Agreement, Water Entitlement Agreement, General Conditions and Transfer Rules Policy) required legal review and updated terms to reflect the new charges and DE temporary trade procedure.

I would like to thank all customers who took the time to come into the office or host a one-on-one consultation with the WMI team at their home/business. This provided unique opportunities to understand the changes to charges, how they may

impact customer bills, and more importantly, what options were available to minimise those impacts.

Customers are more than welcome to continue to ask questions or seek clarification.

## Have you expressed interest in terminating Delivery Entitlements and/or need to make decisions on outlets (to downsize or remove)?

For those customers who have received a Termination Information Statement (TIS) expressing interest in terminating their excess Delivery Entitlements under the 80% discount offer, please be reminded that **the submission of a Form 5 is the first step to take-up the termination offer**. Please make your decisions and act on them sooner rather than later. Please note that all conditions of the offer must be met within the timeframes otherwise the offer becomes null and void. For example, bank consent on any encumbrances can take up to 8 weeks, and in some cases longer.

As part of the changes to the charging system from 1 July 2023, WMI is offering:

- An expression of interest process for permanent transfers of DE's.
- An increase to the number of Delivery Entitlements a NSW High Security Water Entitlement customer can hold before requiring security.

For High Security Water Entitlement (WE) customers, the ratio is now up to 8 Delivery Entitlements (DE's) for every 1 High Security WE.

### Third Quarter Invoice 2022/23

due for payment:  
4.30pm on  
Friday 05 May 2023

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

### Office Hours: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Monday to Friday  
(excluding public holidays)

Contact us:  
T: (03) 5027 4953  
E: [enquiries@westernmurray.com.au](mailto:enquiries@westernmurray.com.au)  
[www.westernmurray.com.au](http://www.westernmurray.com.au)

### Upcoming office closures:

Easter  
Friday 7 to Monday 10 April 2023  
ANZAC Day  
Tuesday 25 April 2023  
King's Birthday  
Monday 12 June 2023

For General Security customers, the ratio remains at 5 DE's for every 1 General Security WE.

- Free downsize or removal of outlets.

If you are unsure about anything, customers are strongly encouraged to phone WMI on (03) 5027 4953 or email [enquiries@westernmurray.com.au](mailto:enquiries@westernmurray.com.au).

More information is available on the WMI website under "2023/24 Fees and Charges".

### **Prosecution starts over alleged water pipeline breach: NRAR announcement 3 April 2023**

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) has begun a prosecution in the NSW Land and Environment Court against a Wentworth region irrigator and company who are alleged to have illegally interfered with a Western Murray Irrigation pipeline and unlawfully taken water from it.

NRAR alleges that on two separate properties in 2016 and 2019 the defendants connected an unapproved pipeline to the Western Murray Irrigation supply pipeline to divert water.

It is further alleged that the defendants took water at these same properties without Western Murray Irrigation's permission in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 water years.

The alleged illegal take of water occurred during a period of severe drought in NSW.

This is the first time NRAR has prosecuted under sections 342 and 343 of the Water Management Act 2000, which are intended to protect water supply infrastructure and stop water being taken illegally from it.

Western Murray Irrigation is a public company responsible for maintaining 184 km of pipelines, pumps and other equipment, which supply and service over 4,100ha of irrigated land in Curlwaa, Coomealla and Buronga.

The main crops grown in the area are wine grapes, citrus, vegetables, fruit and nut trees, dried (vine) fruit and table grapes.

The defendants face two counts of illegally interfering with the water supply pipeline at two premises. They face three counts of unlawfully taking water from the pipeline on three separate occasions.

NRAR Chief Regulatory Officer Grant Barnes said the allegations were serious and highlighted the importance of protecting the integrity of irrigation infrastructure for all water users' benefit.

"We know that the total value of water entitlements in NSW is about \$29 billion, and that figure is rising," Mr Barnes said.

"Regional irrigated agriculture business depends on fair access to those water resources," he said.

"Some of the most valuable water assets in the state are in the southern inland zone of NSW including the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions."

### **Customer portal update**

WMI is in the final stages of updating and testing the new customer online portal.

Customers will have online access to their account details, entitlements, allocations, water ordering system, and 'live' usage data (80mm meters and above with telemetry).

Customers will receive access information and a user guide in the mail in May.

### **End of year surplus water allocation trade**

Customers are strongly encouraged to undertake their own individual trade up to the WMI cut-off date of 10am Wednesday 28 June 2023 to maximise returns.

It is highly unlikely that WMI will be able to undertake a bulk water allocation trade in those last days of June due to a lack of demand and over supply.

### Third Quarterly Invoice Due for Payment

The third quarter invoice for 2022/23 is now available and due for payment on or before Friday 05 May 2023.

Please contact the office before the due date if there are any difficulties in prompt payment of accounts.

To have your quarterly invoices paid by direct debit from a nominated bank account, contact the office for a form and your invoice will always be paid on time.

### Additional Water Fee Reminder

Water usage above allocation is billed quarterly at \$1,200/ML (or part thereof).

Please ensure you **always have a positive water allocation balance**. Customers should contact the friendly office staff for more information.

### Outlet downsizing or removal works underway

WMI operations staff and contractors are busy downsizing or removing outlets, based on customer requests, in preparation for the new charges commencing on 1 July 2023.

WMI thanks customers for their co-operation and would like to remind others to sign off on any changes to outlets as soon as possible (at no cost) so that the works can be promptly scheduled in.



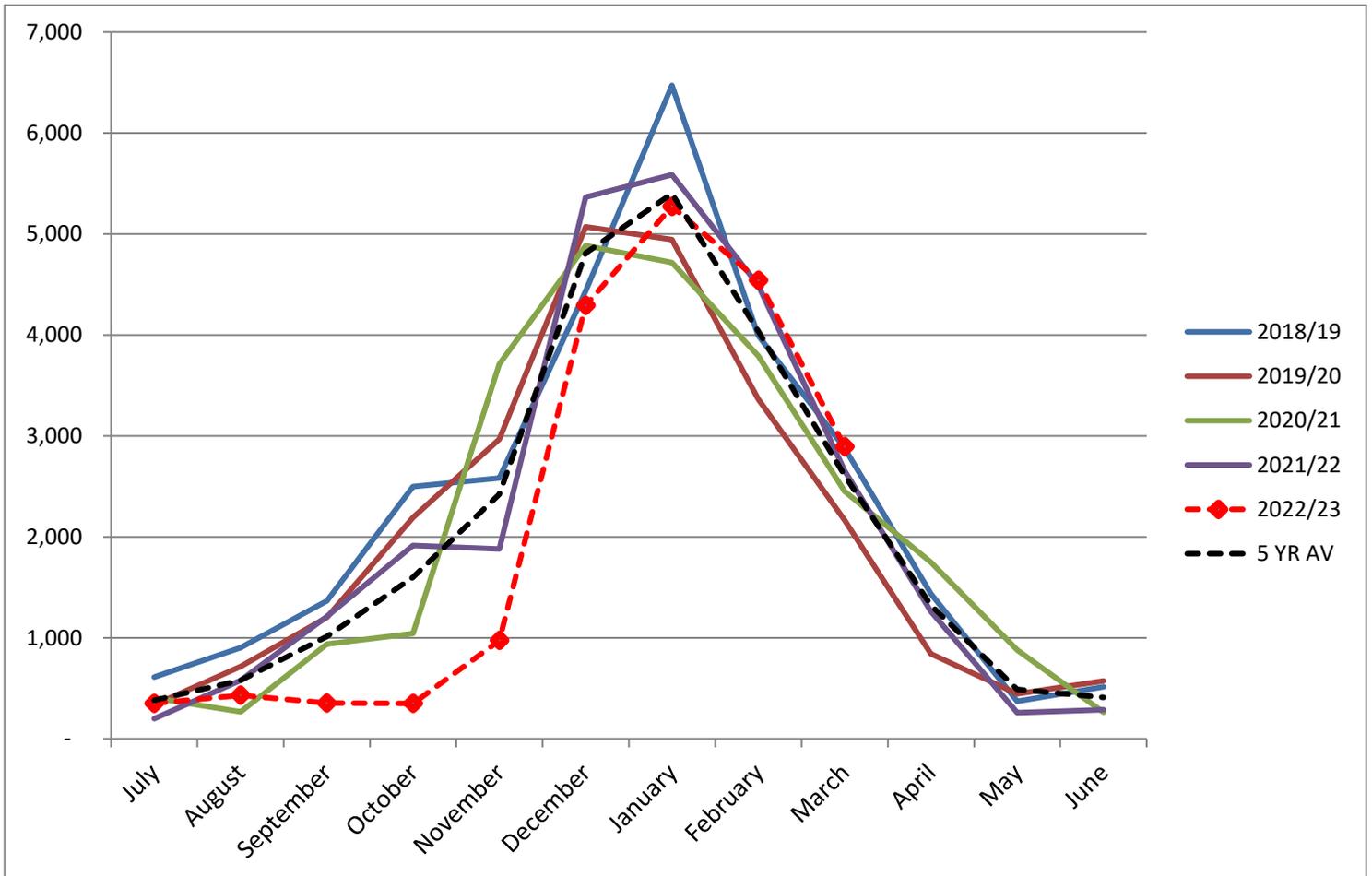
Coomealla outlet downsized to a 32mm

### Please continue to keep outlets clean

The recent wet and warm weather has seen an abundance of plant growth including weeds as well as snake sightings.

Customers are reminded to keep outlets free of weeds, equipment, and rubbish, ensuring easy and safe access for our operations staff.

### Total Water Pumped Over 5 Years (including Year to Date)



### Climate Outlook: April to June 2023

The Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting below median rainfall and warmer than average days for almost all of Australia:

