

Welcome to our spring edition of Southern Rural Water's newsletter for customers in the Macalister Irrigation Area.

In this edition we focus on the terrific works that have taken place over our winter maintenance period from May to August, both from our regular staff and also from the MID 2030 project teams.

We are creating a new way to report, prioritise and action maintenance issues in our delivery systems that will provide unsurpassed levels of service to you. We will continue to concentrate our efforts on removing restrictions from the system.

This, combined with our new automated equipment, makes our ultimate goal of providing great service at affordable prices very achievable.

Everything we do in our channel network is based on providing the highest possible consistent flow rates as we can. We want your customer experience in the MID to be the best that it can be!



Terry Clapham
Manager Water Supply East.

MID2030 update

The Southern Cowwarr and Eastern System modernisation projects are parts of the MID2030 Phase 1A Program.

This program has modernised 180 regulators in Nambrok-Denison and 105 in the eastern system around Sale and Myrtlebank. The works are now complete and being readied for use this season.

The total capital cost of the Southern Cowwarr project is estimated at \$11.2 million and is expected to produce water savings of 4,075 ML. The Eastern project estimate is \$6.05 million with water savings of 3,875 ML.

Both projects will improve levels of customer service as well as positioning the MID to take advantage of our wonderful climate and reliable supply of water into the future.

	Southern-Cowwarr	Eastern
Regulators upgraded	101	73
Regulators abandoned	80	32
Outlets upgraded	52	26
Channel abandoned (km)	14	2
Channel cleaned (km)	60	27
Channel automated (km)	88	55



Maintenance achievements over winter

Carp program

- 1400 meters of main channel was rebuilt between the rail line and Princes highway north of Sale – all parts that are renewed will have a service life of at least 50 years.
- Channel cleaning
- 33 kilometres of channels were desilted, with weeds and debris removed and banks profiled. Both Southern Rural Water (SRW) machines and local contractors have been used to achieve this – When we do this work, we expect we won't have to re-do this work for at least 15 years.
- Approximately 53,000m³ of silt taken out!

Channel inspections

- Channel inspections were conducted through a 'new lens' on 17 channels, which identified 500 individual issues that will in some way cause a restriction or disruption to your flow. Our new asset management system will help prioritize these important jobs.

Trees and erosion works

- 250 meters of erosion works were completed this winter in the Bundalaguah area – this section was on our critical list and our highest priority for bank refurbishment due to erosion.
- Trees were removed from channels in Nambrok and other areas over winter; work that will continue throughout the season. Trees present high risk of bank damage, root mats cause restrictions and debris can cause blockages.

General maintenance

Our field based staff include 22 operator/maintainers who perform all of our minor tasks and automated equipment maintenance.

We have two Caterpillar back hoes and we hire an excavator from Cat-hire most years during the winter period.

We focus our efforts on the below waterline work until the water comes back on in August. All of our MID 2030 work is undertaken by local contractors.



Channel before silt removal



Excavator working on the channel



Channel after desilting

Managing weeds in the MID

Our 2015 submerged weed program will focus on the following channels:

- Main Southern
- Main Northern
- Main Sale



A total distance of 45 km will be included in this season's program. Submerged weeds (mostly ribbon weed) can have significant impacts on our channel capacities, sometimes reducing flows by as much as 30 or 40%. This can delay customer start times and cause havoc with our new automated equipment!

The program will be conducted in-house by SRW staff. Channel automation is making this process a lot easier to manage with our new ability to remotely control water movement. Some of the smaller channels will come into the program this season and will be done using a new SRW created boom application. During this time, customers in these areas will be notified of channel closures for short periods.

The responsibilities for managing weeds in the MID can be quite complex. Below is some information to help clarify who is responsible for what when it comes to noxious weeds in the district:

- private land owners are responsible for managing weeds on their land and on Southern Rural Water easements (except the actual asset components).
- Southern Rural Water is responsible for managing weeds on its asset components and reserves (contact - Kane Watson on **5139 3148**).
- VicRoads is responsible for managing weeds on and along declared roads.

- public land managers are responsible for managing weeds on public land.
- Wellington Shire Council is responsible for managing weeds on council land and municipal roads (contact - Land Project Officer **1300 366 244**).

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is the lead agency for the control of weeds in Victoria.

For more information on how to identify and manage weeds on your land visit the pests, diseases and weeds page on the DELWP website at <http://delwp.vic.gov.au/> or phone **136 186**.



Before



After

Private works agreements

Now is the time to contact us if you are thinking of undertaking any works on or near a SRW drain, channel or pipeline.

Below is a list of on-farm works where customers are required to apply for a "Private Works Agreement":

- channel & drain crossings
- pivot crossings
- access to pump from a channel or drain
- domestic and stock pipe permits
- installation of either underground power cables or pipe lines
- any private works on a SRW easement or reserve.

Private Works Agreements are issued by our Asset Officer in consultation with our engineers and your chosen contractor. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that all works on our drains, channels or easements are completed to SRW's approved standards – ultimately, this is done to protect all the users of the system. Once the Private Works Agreement is completed, you can start your on-farm works. The agreements do not usually take more than a couple of weeks to complete.

It is important to realise that no works can be undertaken on any SRW infrastructure without a Private Works Agreement being in place.

For further information on our Private Works Agreements contact our Asset Officer Daniel Rodaughan on **5139 3216**.



Check your usage and allocation balances

You can use our online and phone-based Waterline system to check your usage and allocation balances.

You can also enter meter readings directly into the system.

If you need help to log in and use the system, please contact our customer service team on **1300 139 510**.

Contact us for more information or to provide feedback

We will continue to provide you with the best information we can on the seasonal outlook and how we are managing the available water. As the season progresses, we will provide regular updates which may help you to plan your farming activities.

We are always looking for ways to improve our customer service. If you would like more information on any of the above topics, or you have any concerns, please contact one of our staff listed below.

Don't drink the water

Any water from sources managed or licensed by Southern Rural Water, including irrigation storages, channels, rivers and creeks, groundwater and farm dams, is untreated. It should not be considered safe for human consumption without proper treatment.



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