

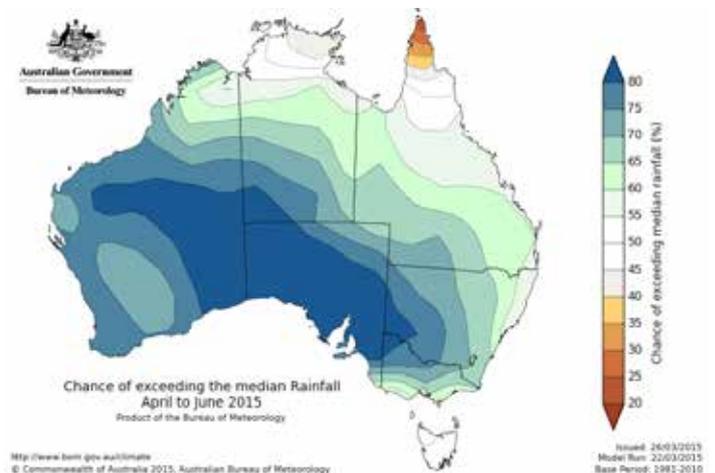
Welcome to our Werribee Irrigation District update, a newsletter for Southern Rural Water's water supply customers. We hope you find the information useful.

Season outlook

It has been an interesting season as far as the weather goes. Spring was dry and warm with low flows into our storages, and summer was cooler than anticipated resulting in lower demand for water compared to the same period last year. However, we still did not get any significant flows of water into our reservoirs.

The outlook to the end of the season is for warmer and wetter conditions than on average (see the map below) but early predictions for next spring show drier than average conditions.

With little or no flows into reservoirs over the summer, Melton Reservoir is currently only 11% full, Pykes Creek is at 60% and Lake Merrimu is at 34%. We have been releasing water from Pykes Creek Reservoir and Lake Merrimu over the summer to maintain enough water in Melton Reservoir to supply the Werribee Irrigation District.



Predicted 2015-16 season starting allocation

We are predicting a starting allocation for next season of between 10% and 15% of high reliability water shares (assuming there will be no significant inflows into the reservoirs before July and based on historical levels of water used for irrigation over April, May and June).

There are two main reasons why the allocation looks like being so low:

- the water levels in the storages have been significantly drawn down due to the dry period
- there is a significant volume of unused water this season which farmers will carry over into the new season in July.

Please note that this is a prediction only and the actual allocation may be very different if conditions change.



Are you looking to buy or sell water

Given the predicted low starting allocation for July, you may need to consider how much water you need for the early part of the season. Now might be a good time to buy some water to cover your needs for the first couple of months of the new season. If you currently have more water than you need, now might be a good time to think about selling some water allocation.

Either way, don't forget Watermatch, our free online trading forum that might help you find someone to trade water with.

Anyone can use Watermatch. If you are interested in buying or selling your water you can simply log on to Watermatch, through our SRW webpage <http://www.srw.com.au/>, or type the word "Watermatch" in Google.

You can either register as a user (a very simple process), or you can call, email or drop into our office in Werribee and our staff will help you.



Billing update

After discussions with some of our customers, and reviewing our billing processes with the Customer Consultative Committee, we will change how we bill your accounts in the new financial year.

We will be moving to an annual bill, with the options to either:

- pay the whole account upfront, or
- pay quarterly instalments (which is similar to the current 4 bills each year and similar to how council rates are billed).

Please note that you will continue to receive separate bills for your recycled water and groundwater accounts.

For more information on the billing change, please call, email or drop into our office in Werribee and our staff will help you.

Information on fees is available on our website at www.srw.com.au



Recycled water update

Given the current dry conditions and low water allocation, we recently introduced the option of recycled water sales. This allows recycled water customers to take an extra 50% of their contract volume with a 15% price reduction.

We were able to do this with the existing volume of recycled water available, as not all customers will use all their recycled water this year. This initiative should maximise the use of recycled water and help to more quickly pay off the debt that accumulated over the last drought. It will provide more water for production and also reduce the reliance of river water – hopefully maximising next season’s allocation.

We will assess each season if we can provide recycled water sales, and how much.



Recycled roster

Below is the split running schedule which started on 19 April 2015.

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM		
	River	River		Recycled		Recycled		Recycled		River			

Winter maintenance supply period

Water supply will be available on the following days if there is sufficient demand.

Monday - Friday	May 04 - May 08
Monday - Friday	May 18 - May 22
Monday - Friday	June 01 - June 05
Monday - Friday	June 15 - June 26
Monday - Friday	July 13 - July 17
Monday - Friday	July 27 - July 31
Monday - Friday	August 10 - August 14
Commence weekly supply from August 24	

4/1 pipeline project - update

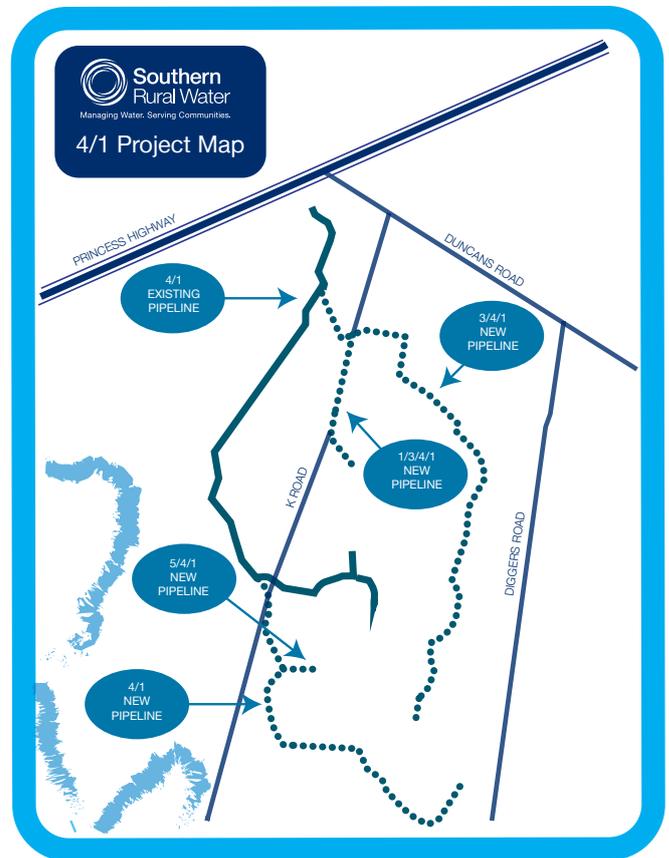
The exciting part of the 4/1 pipeline project is fast approaching, with the new pipe sections ready to go in the ground. Construction work will start mid-May and will continue over the next two winters.

Once completed, the whole of the 4/1 system will be pipelined (the western part of the district, which makes up about a third of the irrigation district).

The new pipeline will be built along the existing supply channels. The old channels and customer outlets will be progressively removed and replaced by the new pipeline as works proceed. Work will be carried out in our usual maintenance period so that there is no disruption to water supply.

Our most recent project newsletter can be found on our website www.srw.com.au

For more information, please contact Amos Micallef, Senior Engineer, Western Irrigation Business on 9974 4754 or email him at amosm@srw.com.au



Groundwater allocation rule changes

New groundwater allocation rules for the Deutgam Water Supply Protection Area have been approved by SRW's General Manager Groundwater & Rivers, Craig Parker. The new rules were developed in consultation with groundwater users across the district and are designed to minimise the need for complete extraction bans in future dry seasons.

Under the new rules, groundwater will be managed in a similar way to river water with a minimum seasonal allocation declared on 1 July each year. The starting allocation will depend on groundwater levels, river water allocations

and the seasonal outlook. Groundwater levels across the district are monitored monthly and are available on our website www.srw.com.au. Users are encouraged to check this information regularly and be informed about likely groundwater allocation for the next season.

The new rules and supporting information are available on SRW's website, at our Werribee office or by contacting us. Information is also available in Italian, Greek, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Regular updates

We will continue to provide you with the best information we can on the seasonal outlook and on 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.

Contact us



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