

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

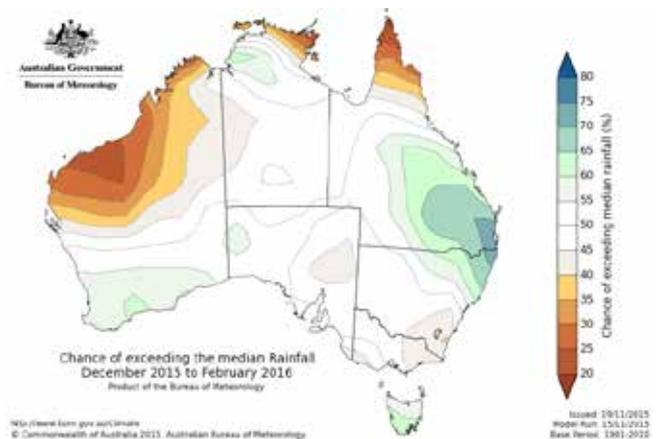
## Season outlook

It has been another dry and warm spring and as a result we did not get much water into our reservoirs. Lake Merrimu is currently at 22%, Melton Reservoir at 20% and Pykes Creek Reservoir at 46%. The Bureau of Meteorology's outlook for rainfall is neutral, with a 50% chance of average rain from December to February. However, with the catchments now drying, it would take a significant storm to get any inflows into the storages over summer.

The longer term outlook is for the El Nino event to weaken early in 2016 but it is uncertain whether this will result in an increase in rainfall.

A good video of the rainfall outlook for the next few months can be seen at the Bureau of Meteorology website at the following link:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/video>



## Securing water for the future

With the return of dry conditions we understand that there are concerns amongst growers around the security of water in the WID. We are currently losing almost half of the water we take into the irrigation district, around 7,000ML per year. This is why we feel it is very important to continue to replace the rest of the old leaky channels with pipelines. If it was all piped then this water would be available for growers and would help see us through these dry times.

There is not enough recycled water contracted with Melbourne Water to supply the WID on its own so we are looking at options to offer more recycled water to WID growers.

We understand that the salinity of the river and recycled water is a problem and that we need to secure some low cost, low salinity water to mix with the recycled and river water to make it fit for purpose.

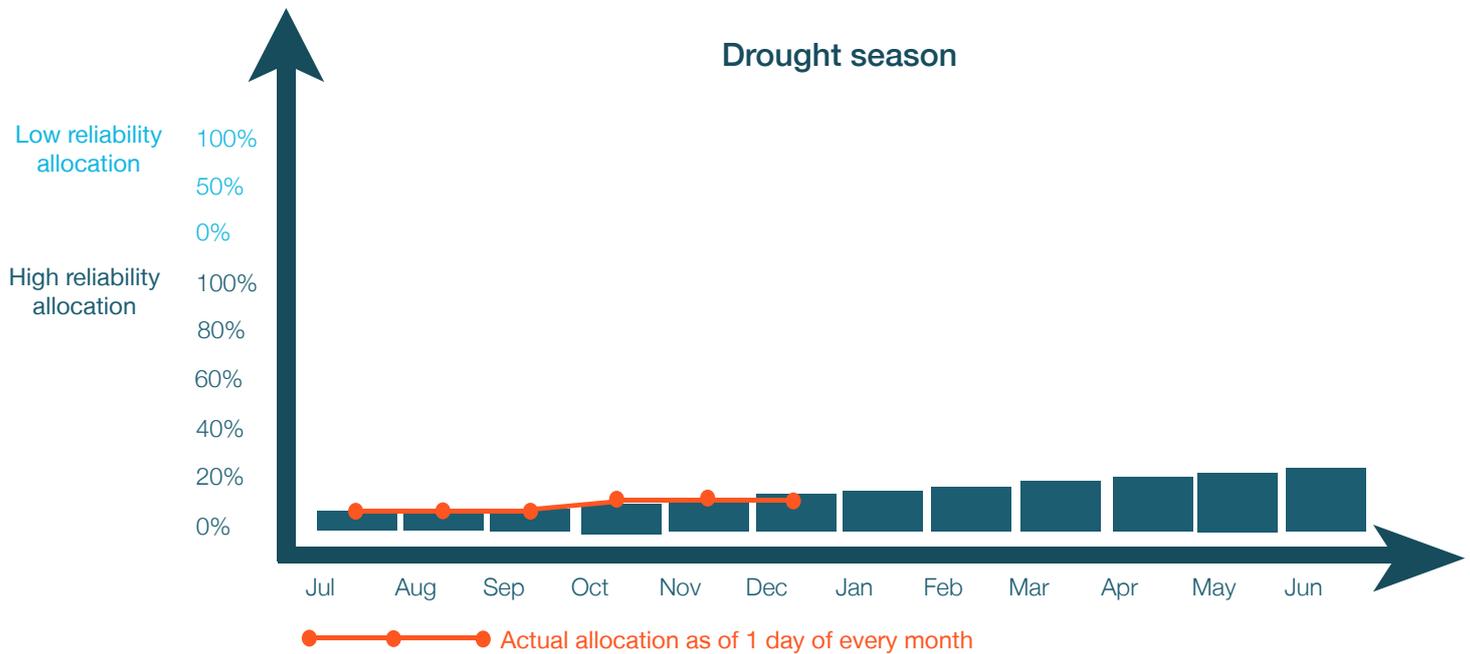
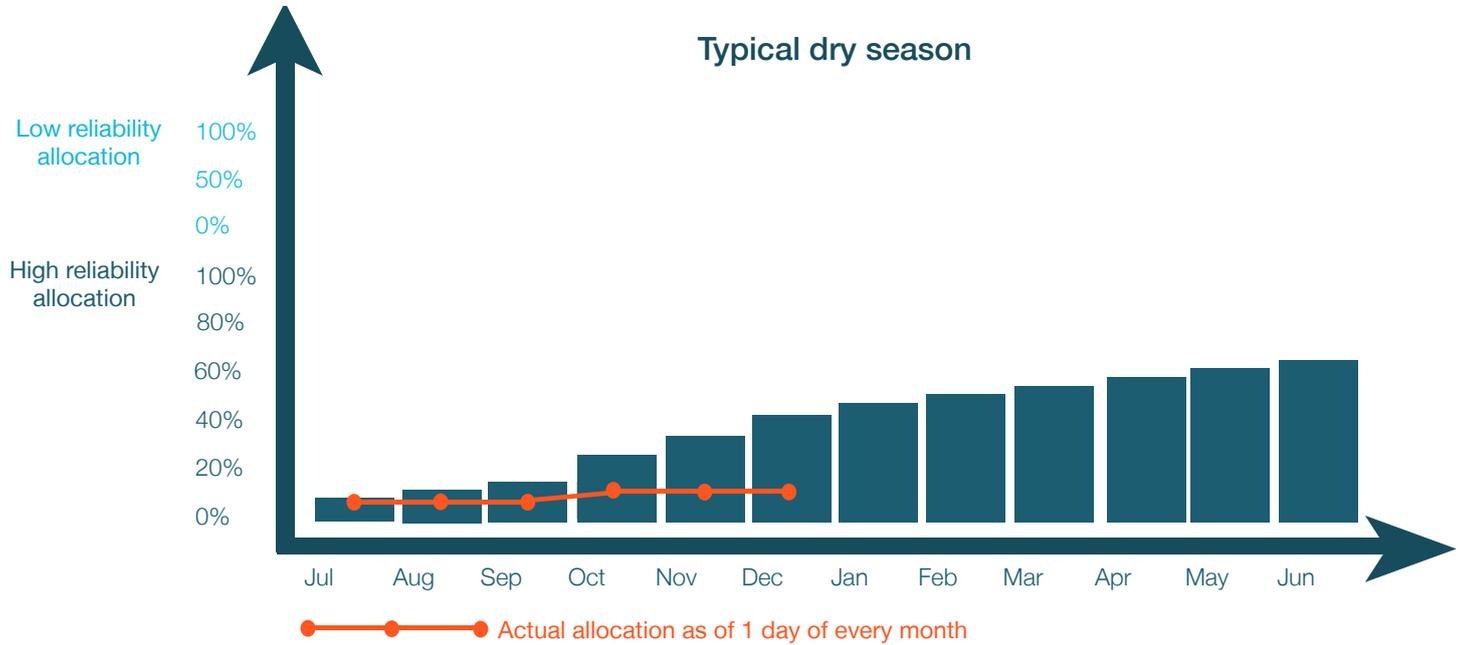
We also understand that the cost of water in the WID is high compared to other irrigation districts. Therefore, we are discussing our plans for the WID with the State and Federal Governments with the aim of securing a funding contribution to help keep prices down.

We are keen to discuss this with all customers in the WID and so will be inviting you to some meetings over the next few weeks.



# River water allocation

The dry conditions over winter, coupled with 3,700ML of water carried over from last season, the allocation for this season is currently at 15%. If conditions continue to follow a drought pattern then the allocation may not increase much.,



With carryover there is currently more river water available than the total that was used in the WID last year (5,189ML of river water available compared to 4,994ML of river water used last season), however, the situation for individual growers varies depending on how much water they carried over from last year.

It is very important that if you do not plan to use all of your water allocation then you consider your options to trade. SRW staff members are happy to advise you and help find other growers to trade with and you can use our free online trading forum, Watermatch. Trading means that you might be able to cover all or some of your water bill for this year and helps get water to those who really need it this season.

## Merrimu unallocated

To help those who need water this season, we have applied to the Government to access the unallocated water in Lake Merrimu. This would provide roughly 600ML of additional water to the WID and BMID. We will let you know when we hear more.



## Recycled roster

Below is the split running schedule which started on 7 December 2015.

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

## Are you interested in some additional income?

Given the very dry season so far, now would be a good time to consider trading your unused allocation if you are not planning to use it this season.

Trading your unused allocation will provide you with additional income to cover your SRW account and support your local community during the drought period.

If you are considering selling your allocation, 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.



## Groundwater update

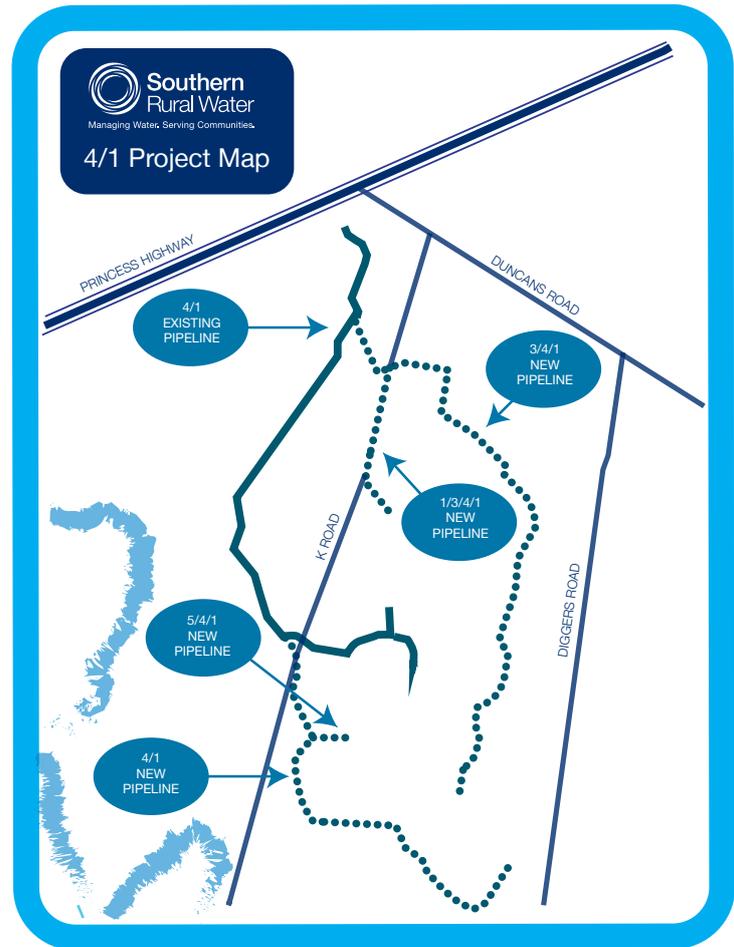
Groundwater allocation for the current season has been set at 50%. We will not be reducing this allocation any further during this season. We will continue to monitor groundwater usage throughout the season and it is important that users remain within the 50% allocation.

Groundwater levels have been declining in the aquifer since the start of the season, though levels are still higher than those in 2003-04 and 2006-07. Groundwater levels are usually at their lowest this time of year and begin to rise closer to Christmas.

We are currently measuring water levels and salinity in the aquifer every month. No significant rises in salinity have been observed so far.

Groundwater level monitoring results are available on our website [www.srw.com.au](http://www.srw.com.au). Customers are encouraged to check this information regularly to be informed about likely groundwater allocation for the next season.

## 4/1 pipeline project - update



### 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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