

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

Opening allocation for the MID

It's been a dry few months in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) and the short to medium term outlook from the Bureau of Meteorology is for a high chance of a drier than normal winter and spring period.

Our records show that we have experienced lower than average rainfall and inflows to our storages since December last year.

Although lower than average, they are not our lowest ever by a long way. Lake Glenmaggie is one of the most reliable storages in Australia and has only ever not filled on five occasions in the last 42 years, so we are always encouraged by this statistic and confident that we will have a successful irrigation season.

Lake Glenmaggie has a catchment four times larger than that of the Thomson dam, but is quite a bit smaller, so it fills and spills regularly in comparison. The rains we have had recently have helped to increase volumes quickly.

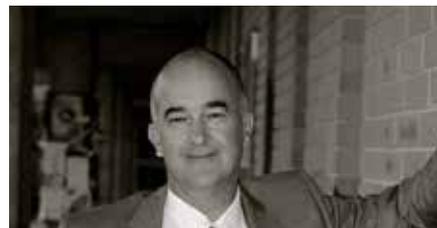
Our Thomson reserve is very healthy at the moment and, at 30 June, was holding 33,700ML which is 75% of capacity.

An opening allocation in early July is a requirement in the MID, as our river diversion customers can operate all year

round. The opening allocation generally increases pretty quickly and is usually quite different by the time the season opens in mid-August for our channel customers.

This season we opened with 45% allocation, and this has continued to rise with recent rainfall. The current allocation is 60% of high reliability water shares for both channel and river customers in the MID.

Don't forget that you can always check the volume of Lake Glenmaggie and the current allocation on the front page of our website www.srw.com.au.



Terry Clapham,
Manager Water Supply East

Maffra Weir Project

Located behind Murray Goulburn in Maffra, the Maffra Weir is designed to raise the Macalister River to allow diversion of river flows to the Main Eastern Channel, supplying 20% of the district.

A project was completed this winter to improve measurement accuracy and control of site operations. Works included a new bypass channel and remotely operated gates. The works were completed by local contractors and finished on time and on budget.

The weir will allow us to meet customer demand downstream of the weir far more efficiently than our current system.



Lifblood clears the arteries

The Lifblood program is helping us to achieve unprecedented performance in the MID channel network.

In the MID, we have a culture of zero tolerance to anything that will negatively affect our channel performance in relation to how you, the customer, experiences your service from SRW. This means our Field Officers are reporting, prioritising and actioning anything that will have a negative effect on your customer experience.

Lifblood is the missing link in our modernisation journey and, through this program, we are ensuring that we get the maximum benefit from investment in the district.

This season, the team has done extensive channel cleaning, removing silt and weeds on the Main Southern channel and in Nambrok/Denison during 2017. A further 130km of channel is being scheduled for improvements in upcoming maintenance periods.

Our reporting continues to show that these works have made big improvements on channel performance and, importantly, on customer service levels at the outlet.



Water Trading and Auction results

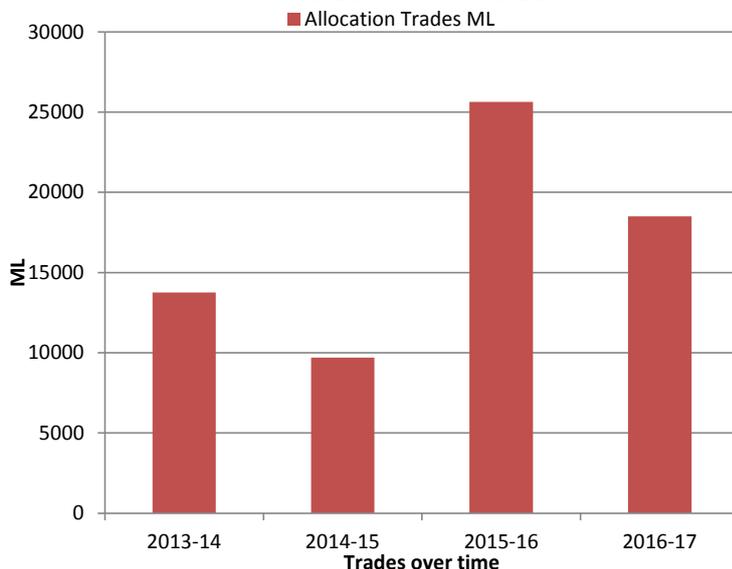
Last season, spill entitlement was available until 5 December and customers used a total of 41,344.6ML on top of their allocation. Allocation trades increased as the season got drier through the summer months with trades peaking in March with over 5,000ML traded in the month. In total, the district traded over 14,000ML for the season.

We continued with online allocation auctions from water savings not yet sold to customers. We held three online auctions on our Waterbid site (which is modelled on eBay) at no reserve price. All up, we sold 404ML of allocation for an average price of \$123.05 per ML. This revenue goes straight into our modernisation fund and forms part of the MID customer contribution to modernisation works.

Online Funds allocation auctions via Waterbid have been successful to date, enabling us to get more water into production and we have had positive feedback from customers. We plan to develop the concept further this year

with a view to allowing customers to sell their own allocation on the online platform. If you want to be involved, please register on "Waterbid" (follow the links from our website).

Allocation Trades



Record-breaking efficiencies

SRW has had a record-breaking year with over 80% delivery efficiency in the MID for 2016-17. This beats the previous record of 75% set in 2015-16.

Modernisation works in the district since the early 2000s and the Lifeblood maintenance program have supported improved water efficiencies. Channel automation, more efficient outlet controls and our new balancing storage at Denison have meant that 80% of the water released to irrigators from Lake Glenmaggie and Cowwarr Weir is being delivered for on-farm use.

The MID end of season outfall figure of 10,117 ML was the lowest result ever achieved and reduced outfalls by 39.2% when compared with last season's record result. This outcome contributed greatly to the overall efficiency improvements.

The results were further supported by improved functionality of the Main Southern channel valves, automated system upgrades and an increased focus from EIB staff, particularly in the older, manually planned areas.



Water Minister visits the MID

The Minister for Water, Lisa Neville visited Tinamba recently to mark key milestones in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Modernisation Project. The Minister announced the completion of the MID2030 Modernisation program's \$32M Phase 1A project, and launched the beginning of the \$60M Phase 1B project.

She was joined by members of the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee, representatives from Southern Rural Water, the Board Chairman and local farmers, who told her of their experiences of modernising irrigation practices.

Irrigators in the MID have begun to update their on-farm irrigation to make the most of the changes, taking advantage of more consistent flow rates and reduced order lead times, which gives them more flexibility to irrigate to suit their farm needs.

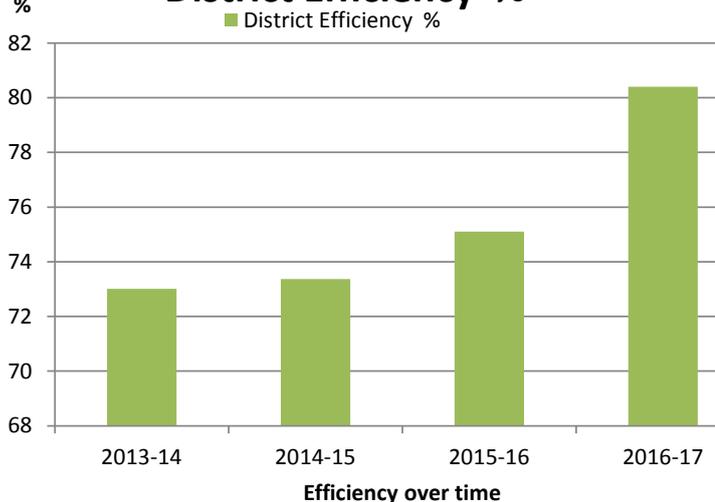
"These upgrades are already delivering a significant improvement in water efficiency and productivity gains, underpinning our strategic vision to boost food and fibre production across our regions," noted Southern Rural Water Managing Director, Clinton Rodda.

Phase 1A was jointly funded by the Victorian State Government and MID customers, and included a \$5.4M balancing storage at Denison, outlet rationalisation, regulator retrofit, and channel automation.

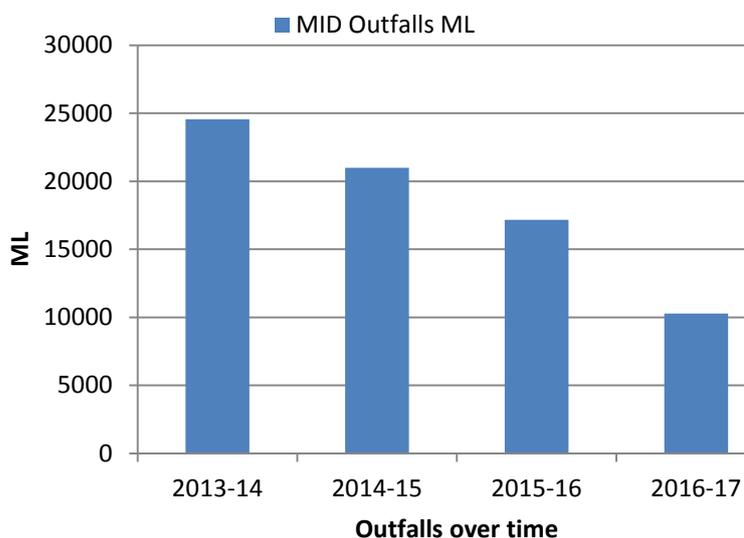
Phase 1B is being jointly funded by the Victorian State Government, Commonwealth Government and MID customers. The works began this winter with a 1.6km pipeline and new inlet structure at Tinamba West. It will replace ageing and inefficient channel systems with approximately 38km of pipeline and automate a further approximately 33km of channels.

(See more detail in the MID2030 Update insert).

District Efficiency %



MID Outfalls



Meet your Water System Planner - Alex "Axle" Young



Axle has been with SRW for 20 years. He has recently gained the newly created role of Group Leader. He started as a Field Operator working mainly in the Nambrok Denison and Sale areas. He progressed through as a Group Leader in the Nambrok Denison area before becoming Planner 14 years ago.

He is Senior Cricket Coach of the Bundalagwah Cricket Club and during winter is part of the stats team for the Maffra Football Club. He enjoys the odd game of golf and is one of the organisers of the annual Rusty Shovel Golf Day.

Axle's daily role consists of:

- scheduling orders as close to requested start time as possible
- being first point of contact with customers
- monitoring channel flows and performance
- coordinating delivery with field operators
- monitoring environmental flow requirements.

He also:

- performs network maintenance on the planning software
- organises filling and end of season procedures
- ensures consistent standard across the Planning team.

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Did you know you can receive the District Update as an e-newsletter, or download it from our website

www.srw.com.au

The new format helps us to reduce operating costs, and can also allow us to add other types of more interactive content into the reports. It is also much better for the environment, helping reduce our carbon footprint.

Please register your email address on our website to receive your District Update, as well as any of our other publications, direct to your email inbox.

Farewell David Rodaughan

We would like to wish David Rodaughan all the best for his retirement. David has been with SRW for a whopping 37 years and we recognised this incredible milestone at our recent annual workshop, and with a farewell morning tea. David has spent about 20 years dealing directly with irrigation district customers as a Planner. We will miss his professional and skillful presence at SRW.



David Rodaughan with MCCC Chair, Iain Stewart at David's farewell morning tea.

Contact us for more information or to provide feedback

We will commit to providing 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 to 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 questions, please contact Pam Crawford, Customer Relations Officer, on the phone number 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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