

A Coliban Water newsletter

for Rural Customers

Issue 5

SUMMER 2005/06

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## Publisher Details:

This newsletter is published  
by Coliban Water for its rural  
licence customers.



## Tell us what you think!

This newsletter is for *you*, so please let us know what you like about it, and what you'd like to see in future issues. Call 1300 363 200 and speak to Frank or Kerri.

## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ...

Although this year has seen improved rainfall across the district, the Bureau of Meteorology gauges at Bendigo and Malmsbury have shown that rainfall for 2005 was still below average. This coupled with a dry catchment has resulted in minimal inflows into our storages, hence urban residents have been moved to Stage 4 restriction and as you are well aware, rural customers are at 50% allocation. Unfortunately, there is little hope for any increase in allocation for this season.

Some of you maybe aware that the State Government recently released it's Regional Action Plan for the Bendigo Region, to cater for future growth within the region. This Plan included a number of Actions with respect to our Rural Channel System, as follows:

- Additional Channel Leakage Control Works to reduce losses
- Upgrading the existing manual flow controls, to automated controlled structures to reduce losses
- A major reconfiguration of the Coliban Rural System
- Enabling external water trading of Coliban Rural system entitlements.

As I mentioned in a previous 'Coliban Channel' newsletter, Coliban Water has undertaken a major review of our rural supply system.

Coliban Water has reviewed the issues raised by the consultants, and discussed the options with respect to the rural reconfiguration with the Rural Customer Advisory Group.

The vision of the rural reconfiguration project is that all existing channels (except for the Coliban and Harcourt Main Channels) will be replaced with a pressurised pipeline supply. This supply would be available all year round.

The project will be undertaken in stages and further information is provided within this newsletter. It is stressed that significant consultation will be undertaken with each customer.

Due to the large size of the rural system, it maybe a few years before your particular supply is affected.

Geoff Michell



## MAIN CHANNEL AUTOMATION

Recent studies into the efficiencies of the rural system have indicated that almost 25% of water released into the rural network is unaccounted for. Precise control and accurate measurement of water within the rural system is essential for improving efficiency and reducing water losses. The current manual, once per day measurement regime is well below recognised best practice within the water industry. The installation of a series of remote control measuring devices within the system, providing continuous real time measurement will greatly assist the efficient delivery of water.

Coliban Water is currently upgrading its flow monitoring and control structures along the Coliban Main Channel in order to better manage flows to both the urban and rural systems. This \$500,000 project will minimise losses from oversupply along the Main Channel and provide a real time understanding of flows.

Frames for the new gates were installed prior to the season, and the gates are currently being manufactured. These gates can be installed in the wet, without disrupting the supply of water.

# Rural Reconfiguration Project

## Background

Coliban Water's Rural Water distribution system was initiated in 1877 with the construction of 65km of the Coliban Main Channel from Malmsbury Reservoir to Bendigo. The system was expanded in 1902 with the construction of Upper Coliban Reservoir and in 1941 Lauriston Reservoir was completed. Lake Eppalock was constructed in 1964. The Rural Supply System now comprises over 500km of open channel varying from concrete lined box section, earthen channel and pipeline.

The Rural System supplies approximately 1,700 customers with individual water use ranging from 1ML/year to over 275ML/year, with 70% of licences holding 2ML/yr or less. Total licensed volume is 14,790ML.

The existing Coliban Rural System has served the community well, but it is apparent that the system is generally inefficient. In conjunction with the reforms proposed in the Victorian Government's White Paper "Securing Our Water Future Together" it is now time for a major upgrade to the system to provide improved levels of service to customers, reduce water losses and minimise environmental damage.

An overall review of the rural channel system has recently been completed and a complete reconfiguration of the rural system has been recommended. A major reconfiguration of the rural system will see virtually the entire open channel network, with the exception of the Coliban Main Channel and the Harcourt Channel replaced with a predominantly piped system of non potable water to suitably sized tanks on each property where appropriate.

## The Vision

- Within the next 15-20 years all channels except the Coliban Main Channel and Harcourt Channel will be closed and replaced by a pumped and piped system
- Most customers will have all year round supply into tanks
- Some customers may be provided with alternative supply (e.g. potable or recycled water)
- Some customers may not receive any supply
- There may be some new customers
- Most customers will not need all of their existing licence entitlements

*The reconfiguration of the rural system will not involve the installation of gravity pipelines on existing channel alignments and supply to open dams, as this will not deliver the desired outcomes.*

## Coliban Rural System Facts

| No. | Supply System         | Customers | Entitlement |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1   | Poverty Gully         | 36        | 182         |
| 2   | Harcourt              | 250       | 4215        |
| 3   | Emu Valley            | 261       | 1568        |
| 4   | Lockwood Pipeline     | 47        | 392         |
| 5   | Lockwood/Marong       | 226       | 1301        |
| 6   | Spring Gully          | 56        | 287         |
| 7   | Axe Creek             | 95        | 584         |
| 8   | Maiden Gully          | 124       | 865         |
| 9   | Ellesmere             | 48        | 185         |
| 10  | Ascot/Huntly/Goornong | 78        | 1323        |
| 11  | Jackass Flat          | 20        | 74          |
| 12  | Cockatoo Hill         | 152       | 204         |

## Opportunities

With the replacement of existing channels with pressurised pipeline providing an all year round supply, there are opportunities for you to change, enhance and potentially increase the area of your property which can be commanded by the new pipeline system.

Additionally, with an all year supply, the need for small dams can be reduced and potentially replaced fully with tanks, thus saving water currently being lost through evaporation and seepage.

These opportunities and any concerns that you may have will be discussed with you personally, as per the timeframe detailed on page 3.



*These types of channels lose significant volumes of water And will be replaced by a pressurised pipeline supply.*

# Rural Reconfiguration Project cont....

## Programme

Due to the size of the project, implementation of the reconfiguration of the Coliban rural system will need to be staged over the next 15, maybe even 20 years. A preliminary 5 stage program has been developed and the following Action Plan will be implemented for each Stage of the Project. It should be noted that this program is flexible and may be subject to change depending on customer requirements and funding availability.

The plan is to commence with the Harcourt and Cockatoo Hill supply systems as "Pilot Areas". Consultation with individual rural customers will be initially undertaken so that Coliban Water can gain an appreciation of how water is used and what the future need for water on each property is. This information will then be used to develop concept plans which can meet the needs of customers.

These concept plans would then be discussed with rural customers and comments sought. Changes could then be undertaken and the overall design enhanced to improve the final service.

## Action Plan

- Letter/Contact to all customers in Project Areas.
- Individual visit to each customer in Project Areas to gather information
- Small group discussions/meetings
- Follow up individual visits
- Preliminary Concept Plans
- Further visits/meetings/discussions
- Refinement of Design Plans
- More visits/discussions etc
- Final Plans
- Further Consultation
- Implementation

## Consultation Program

In undertaking consultation for the project, Coliban Water intended to meet individually with each existing customer, as well as provide a number of specific workshops. Given the large customer base, the Consultation will be undertaken over a number of years (due to customer numbers some phases may take more than one year) as follows:

## Rural Project Officer

Coliban Water has created a designated position to undertake consultation with our rural customers regarding the Rural Reconfiguration Project.

Carmel is currently one of Coliban's Customer Service Officers and will commence her role as the Rural Project Officer at the end of January.

*Carmel Cumming*



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| Stage | Supply Systems                          | Customers | Consultation | Implementation |
|-------|-----------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| 1     | Harcourt & Cockatoo Hill                | 402       | 2006/07      | 2008 - 2010    |
| 2     | Ascot/Huntly & Poverty Gully            | 114       | 2008         | 2009 - 2011    |
| 3     | Emu Valley, Jackass Flat & Maiden Gully | 405       | 2009/10      | 2011 - 2014    |
| 4     | Lockwood/Marong & Lockwood Pipeline     | 273       | 2011         | 2012 - 2015    |
| 5     | Axe Creek, Ellesmere & Spring Gully     | 199       | 2012         | 2014 - 2017    |

## Rural Customer Advisory Group (CAG) News

The Group has met twice since the last newsletter – in September and December. The Rural CAG has been dealing with a recurring theme of discussions on:

- Progress discussions on the rural system review; and
- Discussions on the impact of the Essential Services Commission

In addition, agenda items have included centralising southern rural orders and the impact of low allocations.

Given the current changes facing the Rural Sector, all current CAG members have been asked to extend their commitment for another year.

Meetings for 2006 will be held on the first Wednesday in March, June, September and December

### Rural CAG Members:

|         |         |          |         |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| Gavin   | Privett | Vicky    | Gaudion |
| John    | Vercoe  | Paul     | Mannes  |
| Kerry   | Lorenz  | Jennifer | Goddard |
| Malcolm | Burrows | Paul     | Browne  |
| Tobias  | Ansted  | Peter    | Mazur   |

## Faults and Service Difficulties

All faults or service difficulties (other than orders) should be directed through our 24 hours / 7 days contact number – 1300 363 200.

This will ensure the fastest possible response, and avoid the problem that arises when bailiffs are off-duty or out of mobile range, and do not get your message in a timely manner.

# Rural Reconfiguration Project cont....

