



# IMPORTANT IRRIGATION DISTRICT CUSTOMER BULLETIN

**NAME**  
**ADDRESS**  
**TOWN STATE POSTCODE**

## INTERMITTENT OPERATION OF IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

**WINTER / SPRING 2008/09**  
**(1 July to 30 September or earlier as may be adjusted)**

*The water resource situation at the start of the 2008/09 season is that there is zero allocation and we have a very low provision for losses, which are consumed in operating our delivery systems.*

*The state water resource provider (Goulburn Murray Water) has made approximately 27% of our irrigation system losses, which is 3,500ML out of our total losses volume of 13,080ML, available at this stage. Currently, this volume is only sufficient to pump intermittently for the season.*

*Due to the continuing drought in the Murray Darling Basin, Lower Murray Water has had to implement a management strategy to ensure that there is access to carryover entitlements to customers in the irrigation districts and that there is also access to domestic and stock water.*

*After consultation with the Districts' Customer Service Advisory Committees, we are now introducing the following procedures to be used for the supply of water in Red Cliffs, Robinvale and Merbein Irrigation Districts. These procedures are effective immediately.*

### **a) Background**

Historically, winter pumping had a minimum order to trigger the start of pumping in each district being 100 ML/day in Red Cliffs, 80 ML/day in Merbein and 30 ML/day in Robinvale.

The above figures were reasonable at the time as there was a large amount of citrus in the Districts. In the current water shortage situation, and with the decline of citrus plantings, the above triggers are no longer appropriate. Historically, the frequency of irrigation runs took into account frost protection, drip irrigation capability, domestic and stock needs and the maintenance of minimum soil moisture levels.

### **b) Looking Forward**

It is hoped that further losses provisions will be made available in conjunction with allocation announcements to allow continuous pumping. This current provision will facilitate the delivery of carryover for winter watering of citrus and other crops, but needs to be conserved in the event

that no more loss provision is made available. This conservative approach means that we will not be able to provide normal frost protection capabilities.

While GMW reviews the position fortnightly there is no guarantee of more water. Therefore, we need to implement a conservative approach now and relax it if and when more loss provisions become available.

### **c) Pumping Arrangements**

In developing the following, we have kept in mind the critical needs of crops that require winter irrigation as well as Domestic and Stock (D&S) customers' requirements. D&S customers previously had to have minimum storage of 45,000 litres, but the new Customer Charter recommends that customers have adequate storage for 6 weeks usage.

Pumping and delivery arrangements:

- Fully operate all districts to supply D&S requirements (and any irrigation orders) once every 4 weeks. Water available commencing from 6pm Friday and finishing at 7am Sunday.
- **August;**
  - Partially operate all districts on the weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August, but only filling individual spurs that have orders. Water available commencing at 6pm on Friday and finishing at 7am Sunday.
  - Fully operate all districts to supply D&S requirements (and any irrigation orders) on the weekend of 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August. Water available commencing from 6pm Friday and finishing at 7am Sunday.
- **September;**
  - Partially operate all districts every weekend, but only filling individual spurs that have orders. Water available commencing at 6pm on Friday and finishing at 7am Sunday.
  - Fully operate all districts to supply D&S requirements (and any irrigation orders) on the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September. Water available commencing from 6pm Friday and finishing at 7am Sunday
- If the nominated operational periods becomes fully subscribed with orders on an individual spur or subsystem the delivery period will be extended beyond the 7am Sunday cut-off for that spur or subsystem.
- Orders via the Phone, Internet and Telephony will close at 4pm on the Thursday prior to pumping. Any spur that does not have an order at this time will not operate during that irrigation run. Subsequent orders can be accepted by placing an order with a planner on spurs up to midnight on Saturday of each irrigation run period subject to that spur being operational.
- Each District will be patrolled randomly by the irrigation service providers. The service providers will also randomly monitor start-up & shut-down of irrigation outlets.
- Due to the inadequate loss provision we are unable to fully meet frost control requirements at this stage. We encourage all irrigators to make preparations for frost without the likelihood that water will be available on a continuous basis.
- Cancelling of orders is not permitted. The only acceptable excuses for cancelling, or not taking an order, will be because of a moderate rain event (i.e.25mm or more per event),

genuine pump failure or exceptional circumstances. Cancellation will be accepted if an alternative user is substituted.

- Where a customer cancels without an acceptable excuse the Corporation will issue a 'Notice of Contravention' pursuant to Section 151(b) of the Water Act 1989. Such notice prescribes that a second cancellation by a customer will be a contravention of the Act and subject to a penalty of up to 20 penalty units (\$2,268). This action will be pursued through the courts.
- If any customer is found taking water without an order, outside their order period or outside the nominated operational period, LMW will lock down their outlet. Customers will need to prepay the unlock and relock fee (total \$220) for subsequent water deliveries for the balance of the 2008/09 season. D & S customers will be subject to on-the-spot fines for breaches of Water Restrictions and subject to prosecution under the Water Act 1989 for using a D&S supply to irrigate horticultural plantings.
- A customer that takes water without having a positive balance in their Allocation Bank Account will be locked down until the ABA balance is made good. If not made good within 30 days the Corporation will impose the \$2,000 per ML penalty and make good the ABA overuse. Other penalties as available under the Water Act will be utilised as appropriate for tampering with the Corporations assets, theft of water or otherwise as appropriate.
- Customers who use their irrigation system to pressurise their garden watering systems will be permitted to water their gardens for the full period that their outlet is open. All other prevailing Water Restriction requirements still apply, eg. No lawn watering, dripper systems and hand held hoses may be used (refer Restrictions schedule on the LMW website for full details).
- Please note that the previously supplied Winter Schedule is now redundant.

## **Important Information for Domestic and Stock customers**

All customers that are filling their tanks for a domestic and stock supply are required to fill during the monthly pumping regime. You can fill on the fortnightly pumping only if your spur line is operational.

Please ensure that you monitor your tank levels constantly and ensure that you have sufficient storage. Also, please ensure you have the required set up so that you can fill your tank/s over a 36 hour period as this will generally be the maximum length of the system pumping events.

If your tank/s runs dry, and the system is not operational, it will be your responsibility and at your cost to contact a water carting contractor to have them refilled.