



Murrumbidgee Irrigation

DPI Water Allocations

Stock & Domestic	100%
Town	100%
High Security	100%
General Security	100%

+4% MI addition allocation to eligible customers

Storages at 30 March 2017

Burrinjuck	67%
Blowering	67%

EASYWATER

www.mirrigration.com.au
Freecall 1800 822 450

Easter office closures

Our offices in Hanwood and Leeton will be closed over the Easter long weekend.

- Hanwood office will close at 5pm, Thursday 13 April and will reopen 8.30am, Tuesday 18 April
- Leeton office will close at 4.30pm, Thursday 13 April and will reopen 9am Tuesday 18 April.

Water ordering, supply and delivery will continue uninterrupted. For emergency supply and drainage faults contact Griffith 6962 0262 or Leeton 6953 0146.

Our privacy statement can be downloaded from our website: www.mirrigration.com.au

Contact MI if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARCH 2017 Newsletter

Extended irrigation shutdown this winter

We are undertaking a \$15 million refurbishment of our Main Canal to automate all major regulating structures this winter. This project is critical in enabling us to maximise the benefits of the \$118 million already invested in automation projects across the network, and will also support future investment.

From 26 May to early August (approximately 11 weeks) there will be no access to irrigation water from the Main Canal, and the supply systems that branch off it.

This means that we are unable to schedule a winter watering period this year. We are looking at all avenues to minimise the impact on customers but due to the nature of the works only limited options are available. Customers are encouraged to consider the value of starting the winter with a full soil water profile and maximising on-farm storage where possible.

We are working together with local Councils to ensure town water supplies can be managed through this period. Water will be reserved in pools in the Main Canal (for Griffith) and the Gogelderie Branch Canal (for Leeton) for town supply.

A letter has been sent to all customers explaining the shutdown. Regular updates will be provided in this newsletter and on our website www.mirrigration.com.au.

Pricing review progress

Thank you to our Customer Focus Group members for hosting small group meetings on our new pricing principles. Over the last 3 months we have spoken directly with many customers as well as met with industry and commodity group leaders. We have received some very constructive feedback on our proposed pricing structure. In response to the feedback we are revising how we charge for casual usage and we are also considering transition strategies for customers who may be impacted by the changes. Generally, customers with a large number of outlets and/or very few Delivery Entitlements will see the most change to their prices and our customer engagement team will be consulting these customers directly. We will be writing to all customers again in April with more detail on the revised pricing structure.

IREC partnership - Division 3 automation

Together with the Irrigation Research and Extension Committee (IREC) and our customers at Gogelderie, we are trialing the complete automation of one of our irrigation Divisions. The trial will demonstrate the benefits of automation technology and quantify network cost savings. There will be opportunities to expand automation across the region when the trial has been successfully completed.

As part of our partnership agreement, IREC is offering a **50 per cent membership discount** to all MI customers. An introductory letter from IREC Chair, Rob Houghton, and membership form have been sent to all customers

Reminder - Financial arrangements for fixed and usages charges

Financial arrangements for usage and fixed charges are due to be settled by 31 March. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please consider contacting the local Rural Financial Counsellor on 02 6962 3812 or for more information see www.rfcsnsw-sr.com.au.

Road closures continue

Construction of the new roundabout on Old Willbriggie Road is progressing well. Access to our Hanwood office remains via alternative routes.

Please drive cautiously during the construction period. Sealed road access is available via either Murray Road or Hanwood Avenue.

For further information phone Murrumbidgee Irrigation on (02) 6962 0200.



*Photo: New roundabout along Old Willbriggie Road.
Photo courtesy of Griffith City Council.*

Grape harvest - take care when washing down grape harvesters

With the 2017 vintage continuing, please take care when washing down grape harvesters.

1. Overhead powerlines: Before washing down harvesters and other machinery check there are no overhead powerlines anywhere near the site. Powerlines can be particularly difficult to see at night so it is important a site inspection is carried out during daylight hours.
2. Washdown must take place on-farm: Channel banks must not be used for washing down grape harvesters. Pollutants such as fuels/ oils and decomposing organic matter could potentially enter the supply and drainage system threatening water quality requirements. Breaches in water quality standards impact the efficiency of irrigation businesses.
3. On-farm washdown sites: The runoff from washing down grape harvesters can cause damage to access tracks, road works and irrigation structures. Please choose an on-farm contained basin or similar site that is at least 15 metres away from access tracks and other infrastructure.

Further information can be found on our website under *Learning-Centre/Fact-Sheets*.

On-farm funding still available

The opportunity to increase productivity by improving on-farm efficiency remains open. Under this program, on-farm works will be undertaken in exchange for transferring water entitlements to the Australian Government.

Eligible activities include conversion to high-tech irrigation, soil moisture monitoring, laser levelling, stock and domestic systems, and on farm metering.

Interested customers, should submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) as soon as possible.

For more info see the Modernisation section of our website www.mirrigation.com.au, or contact MI's On-farm Team: Phone - (02) 6962 0200
Email - onfarm@mirrigation.com.au

INDUSTRY NEWS

Murrumbidgee Valley Preliminary water availability outlook for 2017/18

NSW DPI Water have recently released their Murrumbidgee Valley Preliminary water availability outlook for 2017/18. This includes indicative allocations on 1 July 2017, and forecast general security allocations.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, the current hotter and drier than average conditions in the Murrumbidgee Valley are likely to continue through the remainder of autumn.

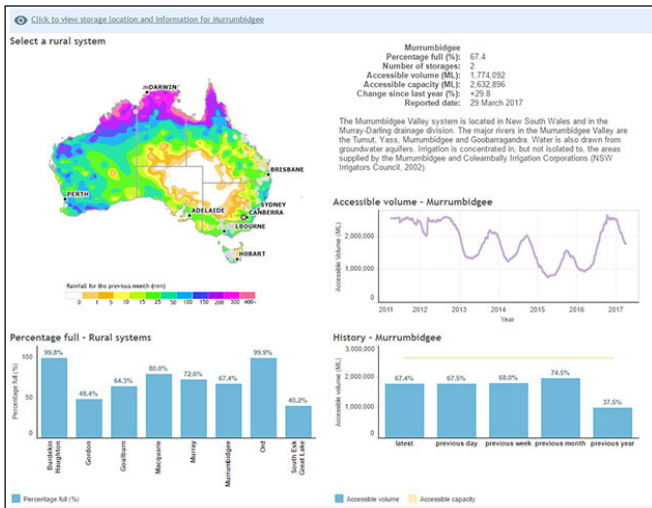
The full outlook statement is available on the NSW DPI Water website www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/water-availability#statements.

Bureau of Meteorology - Water Information Dashboard

The Bureau of Meteorology released a new Water Information Dashboard which provides information on national water storage levels and water markets. The new Dashboard can be found on the Bureau's website www.bom.gov.au/water/dashboards/#/water-markets/about.

The water storage dashboard allows for a comparison between water levels and volumes in more than 300 publicly owned lakes, reservoirs and weirs. It also provided data on how the volumes have changed over the previous year, month, week and day.

The Water Markets dashboard aims to support more efficient water markets, with improved public access to information that supports trading decisions. This dashboard will update and replace the existing National Water Market website.



Quad bike safety rebates doubled

The NSW Government has doubled the value of rebates available to farmers for quad bike safety measures.

Since 2011, 111 people have lost their lives in quad bike accidents nationally, with 29 of these incidents occurring in NSW.

The government's Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program, introduced last July, gave farmers access to a one-off rebate to buy helmets, undertake training, retrofit safety equipment to existing quad bikes, and/or buy a safer side-by-side farm vehicle.

The Government has doubled the rebate to \$1000 for the purchase of a side-by-side vehicle, \$500 for the retrofitting of safety equipment to an existing quad bike, and \$90 for the purchase of an approved helmet. As many farmers have more than one quad bike, from today they can also apply for two rebates, meaning they can be eligible for up to \$2000 rather than the original \$500 if they are buying side-by-sides.

To qualify for the rebates, farmers are required to complete the online course, do a quad bike safety course, or interact with a SafeWork NSW officer. Rebates under the quad bike program are administered by NSW Farmers Phone (02) 9478 1000 or Email emailus@nswfarmers.org.au.