WATERMATTERS

VICTORIAN WATER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEWS

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'JULIA' MAKES HER BREAKTHROUGH FOR THE NSP

'Julia' the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), who along with her crew is responsible for excavating underground tunnels for Stage Two of the Northern Sewerage Project (NSP), achieved her first tunnel breakthrough ahead of schedule in early July.

The milestone breakthrough was captured live by Channel Seven News and has successfully formed a 2.1 kilometre tunnel joining Newlands Road, Coburg North with Jukes Road, Fawkner.

The NSP is a joint project between Yarra Valley Water, Melbourne Water and John Holland to construct 12.5 kilometres of sewerage tunnels deep beneath Melbourne's northern suburbs.

It is designed to increase the capacity of the sewerage system for Melbourne's growing northern suburbs and help protect local creeks by virtually eliminating sewage spills that can occur after heavy rain. It is also is part of the Victorian State Government's Yarra River Action Plan.

Named by a local primary school student, Julia is a state-of-the-art hard rock TBM weighing 228 tonnes and measuring 93 metres. She began her journey back in November 2008, gradually slicing away the three metre diameter tunnel at underground depths of around 30 metres.

Like Gemma and Victoria, the other two TBMs on the project, Julia requires a specialised operator or 'pilot' to guide her using a series of cameras and monitoring gauges from within the operators cabin. She also requires an operating crew separate to the machine at the shaft sites to manage the continual removal of spoil material from within the shaft and tunnels.

The successful completion of this tunnel excavation does not mean Julia and her support crew are entitled to a hard earned break. Following a small maintenance break, Julia will continue excavating another 1.1 kilometre tunnel towards L.E. Cotchin Reserve in Reservoir, scheduled for completion late in 2009.

Julia's crew celebrates the milestone breakthrough.

steve bird

"from the CEO's desk"

Welcome to the winter edition of Water Matters.

I wish I could report that we have had exceptional rainfall over the last few months but unfortunately the relatively dry conditions, that have been a feature of our climate over recent times, continues. According to the Bureau of Meteorology Melbourne's rainfall total for the year is the lowest January to July total since 1976 (when 159.9 mm fell). As we prepare to move out of winter and prepare for warmer weather we hope that the next few months brings our state much needed rainfall.

VicWater is in the process of preparing for our next annual conference which will take place at the Novotel Forest Resort Creswick on the *10th and 11th of September 2009*. The theme for this year's conference, "A climate of opportunity – planning ahead" highlights the many innovative solutions, which have been implemented in response to the current challenges faced by the water industry. The Conference brings together leaders from all of Victoria's water businesses, together with many other delegates who work, or have an interest in the industry.

Prominent speakers at this year's conference include The Hon. Tim Holding MP, Michael Crutchfield MP, Dr Keith Suter, Larissa Brown, Cheryl Batagol, and David Downie.

I look forward to seeing you at the Conference.

YARRA VALLEY WATER RECOGNISED NATIONALLY FOR SUSTAINABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Yarra Valley Water was the only water utility in Australia announced as a finalist in the 2009 National Banksia Environmental Awards, regarded as the most prestigious environmental awards in Australia.

The utility was nominated in two categories, 'Water Award' and 'Large Business Sustainability Award', for its water conservation initiatives and internationally-recognised approach to integrating sustainability at every level of the business - from corporate strategy to day-to-day activities.

'At Yarra Valley Water, sustainability is fundamental to our success. We recognise that both the wellbeing of our community and the strength of our business depends on the health of the environment,' says Mr Tony Kelly, Managing Director Yarra Valley Water.

'Recognition of our activities through programs like the National Banksia Environmental Awards, allows us to share our knowledge with other organisations and help to realise a more sustainable future.'

The 'Large Business Sustainability Award' honours the incorporation of social, financial and environmental responsibility initiatives by a large company, organisation or business.

'Yarra Valley Water has a vibrant environmental learning program so that employees in every area of the business are fully engaged on sustainability issues. We are also constantly looking beyond the provision of water services for innovative ways to improve the sustainability of our business, stakeholders and the water industry as a whole,' says Mr Kelly.

The 'Water Award' category honours the protection, conservation or enhancement of Australia's freshwater resources and marine environments.

Central to Yarra Valley Water's success in water conservation is an understanding that information alone does not achieve water savings – customer participation is crucial. It's why the utility has directly engaged its customers through a comprehensive water conservation program that embraces a wide ranging community of residents, businesses and stakeholders. This includes initiatives like the Water Conservation Kiosks in shopping centres, interactive exhibits at local community festivals, and support programs to help local businesses save water.

Other nominees in the 'Water Award' category included South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Partnership, Greening Australia Capital Region (in partnership with Lachlan Catchment Management Authority), and Reef Check Australia.

Tony Kelly, Managing Director Yarra Valley Water, helping children to use water more wisely in the garden.

NVIRP CARING FOR COUNTRY

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) has recognised the importance of the Yorta Yorta Peoples' right to protect Yorta Yorta cultural heritage and has engaged four Aboriginal Site Monitors to work with NVIRP construction crews on work sites throughout the region.

"The engagement of Aboriginal Monitors such as those from the Yorta Yorta People is only part of the demonstration of NVIRP's commitment to manage the cultural heritage environment in which these irrigation upgrade works are taking place," Murray Smith CEO of NVIRP said.

"Just as we are working with other stake-holders including individual landowners and modernisation consultative committees, conservation groups, and local councils, our relationship with the aboriginal community and their connection to Country is extremely important to us," Mr Smith said.

These two Monitors, Wade Smith and Shaun Atkinson are presently working at the Waranga Major off-take alongside the crew from Comdain Civil Constructions Pty Ltd and are observing the works to ensure any cultural heritage findings are preserved.

Wade Smith said, "We have identified some of the trees close to this off-take as having significant scaring in them, which means that tribal members would have inhabited this region, so these works could uncover discarded tools like broken axe heads and skinning tools.

"Our role is to monitor the areas we believe were populated and where artefacts could be found especially here along the Manalta Floodway which would have been home to a very plentiful food supply.

"If we were to find any artefacts at this site, work would stop to allow us to engage an archaeologist to identify and record and date the find. It would be expected that these items would then be placed in safe keeping, probably at Barmah, where we have a Yorta Yorta Peoples' cultural exhibit," Wade Smith said.

Aboriginal Monitors Wade Smith (left) and Shaun Atkinson.

BANNOCKBURN WATER PLANT UPGRADE

Barwon Water will upgrade the Bannockburn water reclamation plant to meet a predicted four-fold increase in population. The staged upgrade will cost $14.2 million over the next 10 years.

Barwon Water intends to purchase additional land to allow the construction of new treatment and storage lagoons on the existing Stephens Road site. The acquisition will also provide a buffer between the facility and residential areas.

The upgrade will eventually increase recycled water production from 60 million litres a year to 390 million litres. The resource will be available for potential horticultural and agricultural customers in the Moorabool Valley as well as local sporting facilities.

Golden Plains Shire predicts Bannockburn's population will increase to 10,000 over the next 20 years. This growth is significantly more rapid than that projected when the town's sewerage system was built in the late 1990s. The water reclamation plant was designed for a population of 3,000.

Chairman Roger Lowrey said the upgrade would start in late 2009 with the installation of aerators in the existing lagoon to speed up the treatment process. This would be followed by the staged construction of additional lagoons and recycled water infrastructure.

"To meet forecast growth, we will upgrade infrastructure to manage increased sewage flows associated with a growing population," Mr Lowrey said.

"The project has been included in our capital investment program and will ensure we meet the development needs of Golden Plains Shire."

Barwon Water proposes purchasing 37 hectares east of the existing plant in 2011 to form an essential buffer between the plant and future residential development and for possible irrigation. This will free up land currently used for irrigation for new treatment and storage lagoons. It is also planned to purchase a further 60 hectares in the area in 2021 for additional irrigation when two more lagoons are constructed on the existing site.

Mr Lowrey said no native vegetation would be cleared and the Stephens Road bushland reserve managed under a Trust for Nature conservation covenant would continue to be protected.

"The upgrade will only involve open pasture. Environmental overlays on the land will remain protected under Barwon Water ownership," he said.

Mr Lowrey said an increase in sewage flows would create additional recycled water. Expressions of Interest in this valuable resource would be advertised to identify potential customers.

Barwon Water has started consulting key stakeholders, including Golden Plains Shire Council, landowners, the local community and environmental groups.

FREE RETROFIT PROGRAM – FOR CUSTOMERS IN GENUINE HARDSHIP

Wannon Water has joined with Southwest Primary Care Partnership in a new initiative aimed at reducing eligible customers' water bills by providing a free water audit and repairing or replacing inefficient water fittings for customers in genuine hardship.

The Retrofit Program is funded by Wannon Water and Southwest Primary Care Partnership and is administered by Wannon Water. The program aims to educate customers on the benefits of water conservation and where necessary, may include:-

- Replacing washers on leaking taps
- Installation of flow control valves or aerators to reduce water flow;
- Repairing of minor leaks;
- Installation of three star rated shower roses
- Repairing faulty or inefficient toilet cisterns; and/or
- Minor adjustments to hot water services

A water conservation auditor or licensed plumber conducts a water efficiency audit for customers identified as being in genuine hardship. Following this audit, a licensed plumber undertakes appropriate retrofitting at no cost to the customer. If any additional plumbing work is required to assist in reducing water consumption and make the property more water efficient, this is then negotiated between the customer and the licensed plumber.

This new program is part of Wannon Water's pro-active credit management activities.

NEW RECYCLED WATER PLANT DELIVERS CLASS A GROWTH FOR MELTON

Western Water's new $7 million Class A Recycled Water Plant at Melton was officially opened by Don Nardella MP, Member for Melton, on Friday, 10 July.

The project has been jointly funded with $3.5 million from the Victorian Government's Water Recycling Fund, $1.75 million contributed by the Eynesbury Development Joint Venture group and $1.75 million provided by Western Water.

The new plant provides Class A recycled water to the Eynesbury residential development, and has already netted Western Water the 2009 United Nations Environmental Award for Excellence in Sustainable Water Management, as well as finalist listing for the 2009 Premier's Sustainability Award.

"Our Class A plant is able to provide five million litres of recycled water daily to Eynesbury for use in toilet flushing, residential garden watering, recreational irrigation and fire fighting, reducing the use of household drinking water by half", said Western Water Chairman, Terry Larkins.

This project is a model for water sensitive urban design. To accommodate population growth, the plant has a modular design so that it can be easily expanded to deliver up to 15 million litres daily, with potential drinking water savings estimated at more than 4,200 million litres annually by 2030.

Water Infrastructure Group (WIG) – the contractor delivering this award winning plant – will operate the plant for the next three years. WIG designed, built and operates Melbourne Water's Eastern Irrigation Scheme which provides Class A recycled water to the Sandhurst development in Melbourne's south-east.

The technologically advanced plant features a five barrier treatment, including microfiltration where the water passes through tubes 1000 times smaller than a human hair; and disinfection of the water with Ultraviolet (UV) light 1000 times more intense than the UV in sunlight.

L-R John Wilkinson Western Water Managing Director, Don Nardella MP, Member for Melton and Terry Larkins Western Water Chairman at the Class A Launch

SUCCESS IN WATER EDUCATION - *WATER AWARE*

South Gippsland Water has been successful in gaining a Smart Water Fund grant to assist in the implementation of an innovative education program for secondary and primary schools across the South Gippsland Region.

The Smart Water Fund grant will make the "Water Aware" program available to the 35 Primary and Secondary Schools across the South Gippsland Region over the next three years.

Water Aware is an ambassadorial program for years five to eight, where selected students attend a two-day water awareness workshop within their community.

Learning areas include water collection, water quality, water use (rural, commercial and urban), the treatment of wastewater and the effects of effluent on the environment. Knowledge is gained through exposure to guest speakers and tours of the area and local water infrastructure.

Students then research a topic and with the help of facilitators deliver a presentation to their school communities as well as the general community and community leaders at a gala presentation evening.

Graeme Jackson, South Gippsland Water, receives funding certificate from Yarra Valley Water's Managing Director Tony Kelly.

Activities are designed using Victorian Essential Learning Standards curriculum and promote leadership skills, planning and information technology, working in teams, community engagement and building on relationships with community organisations.

The Smart Water funding was achieved through a partnership with South Gippsland Water and Kath Herbert, Director of Beewise Education.

EXTENSIVE WORKS PROGRAM ANNOUNCED FOR LOWER MURRAY WATER

Expenditure of nearly $300 million will be invested in urban and irrigation water infrastructure over the next decade under a consolidated capital works program announced by the Chairman of Lower Murray Water (LMW), Michael Tilley.

The Lower Murray Water's capital works program was unprecedented in the history of the water sector in northwest Victoria, and would benefit residents and irrigators from Kerang to the South Australian border.

The program includes $130 million in capital works already announced under the current, combined five year Water Plan 2008-2013 for LMW and the former FMIT.

Another $60 million of works will be scheduled under the 2013-2018 Water Plan, while the Commonwealth's commitment up to $103 million will fund the principal elements of the Sunraysia Modernisation Project to upgrade infrastructure in the Merbein, Red Cliffs and First Mildura Irrigation Districts.

Managing Director, Mr. Ron Leamon said that the 2008-2013 works program included urban projects such as the major upgrade of the Koorlong Sewerage Treatment Plant estimated to cost $30 million.

This project will provide Class C treated wastewater for sale to Lower Murray Water's thirdparty reuse partner Thurla Farms , for use on horticultural crops.

The treatment plant has been designed to cater for future residential and industrial growth in Sunraysia. Mildura and surrounding townships of Merbein and Red Cliffs.

Included in the program is the completion of the $40 Million high pressure irrigation scheme at Robinvale which has previously been jointly funded by the Victorian State Government and LMW and the $103 million Commonwealth Government grant for irrigation upgrades in the Sunraysia region.

Details of the current Water Plans for LMW and the former FMIT are available on both the LMW and Essential Services Commission websites.

TASKGROUPTOPICS

Water Educators Task Group (WETG)

As reported in the Autumn 09 edition of Water Matters, the next major calendar event for the WETG and associated Network is National Water Week (NWW).

This year NWW will take place 18 – 24 October and the theme is "Securing Our Water Future". NWW is designed to assist our community to take actions that help protect and conserve our most precious resource - water. Each year Victorian water businesses, Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) and WaterWatch, with support from local councils and media outlets hold a variety of events.

As part of NWW celebrations Victoria runs a poster competition each year, which is aligned with the national theme and image. This competition has been running in Victoria since 1994 and is open to all students in Victorian primary schools. It ensures that water is put in the forefront of children's minds whilst allowing them to explore the issue on their terms in a creative way. The competition continues to attract thousands of entries with both regional and state prizes being offered.

Each water businesses participating in the competition promotes and coordinates a local competition within their local schools, with prizes, presentations and local media exposure. VicWater then coordinates state level judging, bringing together all the regional area winners – with prizes and presentations throughout NWW. The VicWater website has more information on this poster competition. Contact April Jenkins at VicWater on (03) 9639 8868 for further information.

Be sure to visit www.nationalwaterweek.org.au to view the national image, get loads of tips for running a National Water Week event as well as general information that can be used to encourage protection, rehabilitation and improvement of our water environments.

BACCHUS MARSH FARMER RECEIVES SUSPENDED SENTENCE

A Bacchus Marsh farmer has become possibly the first person in Victoria to receive a prison term for a Water Act offence.

Domenico Sgarbossa, 68, was successfully prosecuted for taking and using groundwater without authority (or a licence).

Mr Sgarbossa, who pleaded guilty to the offence, also admitted to three prior convictions for offences of illegally taking water.

He was sentenced to one month imprisonment, fully suspended for a period of 12 months, and ordered to pay costs of nearly $3000.

Groundwater and Rivers Supervisor John Deans said investigations by Southern Rural Water field staff in February this year showed that Mr Sgarbossa was illegally taking groundwater via a bore on his property, without holding a current licence.

Staff estimated that he extracted approximately 8.8 MLs of water before being caught. In sentencing the court referred to Mr Sgarbossa's prior history and the importance of the licence system particularly as water becomes scarcer.

"We believe Mr Sgarbossa may be the first person in Victoria to receive a prison sentence for a Water Act offence," said Groundwater and Rivers Manager, Craig Parker.

"It's a timely reminder for farmers that they must have a valid licence to take and use water.

"Given that there is so little water available, we rely on farmers to do the right thing so that we can protect water supply for everyone."

Southern Rural Water encourages members of the public to report possible breaches of the Water Act for investigation.

For more information about water licences contact Southern Rural Water on 1300 139 510.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD FOR PIPELINE PROJECT

The Australian Business Awards 2009 have recognised the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project through an award for 'Environmental Sustainability.'

The award acknowledges GWMWater commitment to the 'enhancement, preservation and protection of the environment', based on the environmental performance of the project. The 2009 Australian Business Awards have been presented to sixty-seven organisations selected from a field of 928 entrants across various industries.

The successful organisations have achieved award winning standards in a diverse range of areas including innovation, quality, community contribution and environmental sustainability.

GWMWater Managing Director Jeff Rigby was pleased that the project is receiving recognition for environmental management and its contribution to regional sustainability.

"As well as the overall water savings objective of returning water previously lost through seepage and evaporation to the environment and for future regional sustainability, the award acknowledges the construction planning and environmental management practices of the project", Mr Rigby said.

"The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project has established high standards for environmental management. Issues such as the development of comprehensive Environmental Management Plans, minimizing vegetation impacts, soil management during construction, compaction and erosion controls, managing waterway crossings and construction site rehabilitation have all been priorities for the project and it is great to receive this independent recognition", he said.

Over 7,500 kilometres of the total 8,800 kilometre pipeline has been installed, with construction of the project scheduled for completion in early 2010.

CITY WEST WATER IS PROVIDING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING IN THE URBAN WATER INDUSTRY PROJECT

City West Water's Technical Officer Development Program is in full swing, with the initial intake of 13 cadets having just completed their first six months of water industry technical education and training.

The program which takes around five years to complete, is run in conjunction with Victoria University and gives high school-leavers and people with pre or post trade qualifications the opportunity to pursue an exciting career in the urban water industry.

Cadet Jacob Green is enjoying his involvement in the program and the challenges that it is presenting.

"It's a lot of information to take in, but it has been very exciting. The program has a lot of variety and a great mixture of schooling, learning about City West Water and field trips that give us hands-on experience."

Working across a broad range of departments, students get a taste of the various technical roles in the water industry including:

- Operations and Maintenance
- Standards and Design
- Land and Property Development
- Capital Works
- Asset Performance
- Asset Information

City West Water is getting ready to recruit its next intake of 10 students, anticipated to begin the program in February 2010.

There are no prerequisite subjects, enter scores or experiences required for application. City West Water is looking for students who have strong learning ability, passion and commitment.

City West Water cadet Jacob Green.

More information is available from www.citywestwater.com.au.

BARWON WATER'S COMMUNITY NURSERY HAS TAKEN OUT A MAJOR LANDCARE AWARD

The South Geelong nursery was judged best in the local government partnership category of the 2009 Corangamite Landcare Awards. The award recognised "an outstanding organisation working with the community to manage and preserve the local environment and natural resources".

The nursery was established more than 20 years ago to produce indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses for revegetation, landscaping and restoration projects. It recently produced its one-millionth plant. The facility is currently used by more than 40 community organisations, including special needs groups such as the visually impaired and the aged.

Barwon Water Managing Director Michael Malouf said the nursery, or tree propagation centre, had become important to the corporation's sustainability planning.

The most significant recent project had been major revegetation at the Black Rock environmental precinct. An example of partnering the community was producing 10,000 indigenous shrubs for the Batesford Stonehaven Landcare group for the Moorabool River.

Mr Malouf commended the achievements of the nursery and the staff involved in its operation. "The centre will continue to make a vital contribution to achieving our strategic aim to be an environmental leader in the community," he said.

G-MW MANAGING DIRECTOR NAMED IN TOP 100 AUSTRALIA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ENGINEERS

Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) Managing Director, David Stewart was recently named in Australia's Top 100 Most Influential Engineers in the Australian Engineers Magazine.

G-MW Chairman, Stephen Mills said the award was a significant personal recognition of Mr Stewart and his status as Managing Director of Goulburn-Murray Water. "David Stewart has been with G-MW for 14 years and been the Managing Director of G-MW since February 2008," Mr Mills said.

"The Award also recognises the significance of David's employment with G-MW, which is Australia's largest rural water authority. David is also Chairman of Australia's peak Dams Industry body, ANCOLD (Australian National Committee on Large Dams)," Mr Mills said.

Mr Stewart was named in the Industry category, which looked at the size of the organisation, revenue and personnel. G-MW employs 670 staff across a region the size of 68,000 square kilometers.

G-MW manage 17 storages across Northern Victoria including two of Australia's five largest dams, service an area that includes three Catchment Management Authorities, supply water to six urban authorities and their civil infrastructure base in 2007/08 had a turnover of almost $160 million.

GARRY ATKINS CAN'T BELIEVE HE DOESN'T MISS HIS DETHRIDGE WHEEL

Standing in a crop of Sudax almost taller than himself Garry Atkins can't believe he doesn't miss his Dethridge wheel.

On Christmas eve last year Mr Atkin's new Magflow meter was commissioned and since then he has watered his 3.2 hectare Sudax four times.

"I couldn't believe that this meter would pump out the water so quickly, the improved performance means I can water each bay now in less than four hours when it used to take me 12 hours," he said.

"Furthermore, you hear the stories of Detheridge wheels not measuring accurately, well I can now water my crop with less water, in fact, yesterday I only used 0.9 ML as a result of getting the water over the paddock faster. In the past with the Dethridge wheel I used anywhere from 1.2 - 1.5 ML. Mr Atkins farm is at Toolamba and his spur waters off the CG1 channel and since the regulator was installed last year it has delivered a better service to his farm because the level of water has been constant, so that has improved the flow rate and capabilities of his irrigation water flow.

"When you key in your requirement at the meter box the gate automatically rises up and down to keep the flow rate accurate and constant whereas the Dethridge wheel did not have those capabilities.

"I was pretty sceptical about the new meters but I am sold now because I know I am only paying for what I put on my paddocks," Mr Atkins said.

Mr Atkins has taken the opportunity to upgrade his on-farm irrigation connection through Stage 1 of the $1 billion irrigation modernisation project being undertaken through the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP).

Garry Atkins standing in a crop of Sudax.

FIRE RECOVERY PROJECT WINS TWO NATIONAL AWARDS

Goulburn Valley Water was recently awarded the best water and wastewater project and project of year at the PACE Zenith Awards in Sydney. The project was titled "How to Restore a Fire Damaged Water Treatment Plant in Five Days."

Goulburn Valley Water was up against nine other projects to win the Water and Wastewater category and 53 other finalists for the Project of the Year Award. The project was in relation to how the Corporation rebuilt the control room that operates the Kilmore Water Treatment Plant after it was totally destroyed on Black Saturday.

The control room housed all the electrical switchboards, control systems and chemical dosing components for the Kilmore Water Treatment Plant. Goulburn Valley Water had to get the new control room up and running again as quickly as possible because the Corporation was unable to produce potable water for Kilmore, Wandong and Heathcote Junction and only had five days water supply in storage.

The project is an excellent example of an engineering/disaster recovery project. Although the five day duration was only short, all typical phases (planning, procurement, construction, installation and commissioning) of this type of project were experienced and executed extremely well under difficult circumstances.

Winning the PACE Zenith Award provides national recognition to all those involved, including staff, contractors and vendors, in the restoration of the Kilmore Water Treatment Plant.

PACE Magazine editor, Ms Sarah Falson said "The team at Goulburn Valley Water pulled together in the face of adversity to complete a top-notch, world-class process control project.

"*The company's 'How to restore a fire damaged water treatment plant in five days…*' project was a prime example of the extreme climates that Australian engineers must face every day. The group executed the repair work professionally and quickly, using its expertise to ensure the affected towns could continue to access clean water.

PACE magazine commends the team at Goulburn Valley Water for its foresight, project management and engineering excellence – each of which contributed to an exceptional, standalone engineering project."

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