

Tapping In



GWMWater

Newsletter 4 2024/2025

Nhill Renewable Energy Facility
photographed by Luke Harley from
Next Generation Electrical.

Leap forward for local energy

In a major leap forward, the Nhill Renewable Energy Facility has successfully been connected to the electricity grid.

This innovation will directly offset 70% of the electricity used by our 330 sites, propelling us toward achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2025 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2035. Our investment in renewable energy allows us to continue to deliver essential water and sewer services, without passing on the cost of rising energy costs to our customers.

The facility is being jointly developed, owned and operated between GWMWater and Vibe Energy, an energy infrastructure company based in South Australia.

GWMWater has also successfully secured \$400,000 in funding from the DEECA 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program for the development of the Donald Community Power Plant Project. More information to follow in the next edition!



The VFA's Mark Adams and
Isabelle Staples relocating catfish.

Catching catfish

Lake Lascelles at Hopetoun is playing an important part in the future of freshwater catfish and their road to recovery.

An impressive 23,000 freshwater catfish were netted from Lake Lascelles in late March by Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) to be relocated to other waterways. This was following genetic testing at their Arcadia hatchery in Shepparton that showed these fish would adjust well to a new habitat.

"Relocations like these can help fast-track the recovery of wild populations which means creating more recreational fishing opportunities in years to come.", said VFA's Chief Executive Officer, Travis Dowling.

The majority of catfish will be released into suitable waters in coming weeks with around 75 mature fish being retained at the hatchery for future breeding.

GWMWater places a high value on lakes and weir pools because of the environmental benefits, the opportunities for local communities to enjoy recreational activities, and the visitors they attract to our region.

Lake Lascelles is one of many recreational lakes across our region that receives a top-up from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline. This is made possible under a recreation water entitlement held by us specifically for this purpose.

WHAT'S INSIDE

▲ NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM

▲ UNIVERSITY BOOK GRANTS

▲ LEADERSHIP UPDATES

New and exciting education program launches in 2025!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our new education program for 2025!

Designed to engage and inspire students, this program focuses on key environmental topics such as:

- the natural and urban water cycles,
- water conservation; and
- the crucial role water plays in health and the environment.

Our primary school sessions have already received fantastic feedback, with teachers and students enjoying the interactive and energetic approach. These sessions are tailored to match the curriculum, providing hands-on learning experiences that bring these important topics to life.

We're excited to see how this program will continue to inspire young minds and encourage the next generation to become water-wise and environmentally conscious!

For further information, or to book a session, go to gwmwater.org.au/book-a-session



Water for Murrayville wetlands project

In 2022, a survey of the Murrayville area identified several issues that were impacting the area's sustainability, which led to a Murrayville Wetlands and Walking Trail Project. This project aimed to improve the environment in the area, and create a place for the community to gather and unwind.

To ensure the wetlands basin maintains a suitable water level during dry periods, GWMWater explored water supply options. After careful evaluation, the Wetlands Committee decided that accessing water from the Murrayville Recreation Reserve Bore was the best solution, balancing cost, environmental impact and a long-term solution to support the wetlands during dry periods.

The Murrayville Wetlands have also significantly reduced flooding by repurposing the town's stormwater. Before the upgrade to the town's drainage system, stormwater often caused flooding in local homes and businesses, but the wetlands now capture and manage the runoff, reducing the risk of flooding.

Aerial image of Murrayville, photographed by Frankie Gloster from Murrayville Community College.



Supporting the next generation of learning

In October 2024, GWMWater launched the VCE Student Sponsorship Grant, a new initiative aimed at supporting the next generation of science and innovation leaders. As part of our commitment to investing in the community and future workforce, the grant provides up to \$1,000 to assist students with the cost of university books.

We are proud to offer this sponsorship to five students who demonstrate a passion for science and innovation. One of our inaugural recipients, Callahan Elliot from Nhill College (pictured), is pursuing a double degree in Bachelor of Engineering/ Bachelor of Computer Science. With aspirations to become a Mechatronics Engineer, Callahan's dedication to advancing in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields is exactly what this grant aims to support.

We are excited to help these talented students reach their academic goals and contribute to the future of science, technology, and engineering. We look forward to seeing the incredible impact they'll make in their fields!

For more information on the grant, email allcomms@gmwwater.org.au



Callahan Elliot from Nhill College received \$1,000 to assist with the cost of university books.

Updates to our Senior Leadership Team

Same face, new role!

We would like to congratulate **Nick Mumford, Executive Manager Service Delivery**, who has been successful in being appointed to the **Executive Manager Infrastructure** role!

After nearly six years in the role Executive Manager Infrastructure, Nalaka Vitharana, has chosen to pursue new career opportunities and relocate to Queensland to be closer to family.

Nalaka's dedication to work hard, genuine care for the community and a passion for fostering staff development, will be greatly missed. We extend our best wishes to Nalaka and his wife, Michelle!



Nick Mumford



Nalaka Vitharana

Mark Williams reappointed

GWMWater's Board has confirmed our Managing Director, Mark Williams, has accepted a two-year contract extension.

Mark has led the organisation since 2011 and has worked for GWMWater since 1996. The Board supported Mark's desire for a shorter-term contract to maintain momentum on several major projects including the roll-out of 'front of meter' renewable energy initiatives, as well as a review of the organisation's strategic objectives and organisational values.

During Mark's time as Managing Director, water security in Western Victoria has been enhanced with the extension of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline into south-west Loddon and a further extension in construction phase in the east Grampians.

Mark oversaw the first Victorian rollout of a full fleet of digital water meters for customers, as well as the implementation of our Customer Portal, which allows customers to track their water usage in near-real time.

In Mark's time, GWMWater also reached its target to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, four years ahead of schedule following the completion of successful 'behind-the-meter' renewable energy projects.



Looking for a new career?

Sign up for job alerts and see a list of positions available at gmwwater.org.au/careers

Field days a success!

GWMWater staff and customers enjoyed attending this year's Wimmera Machinery Field Days, in March.

At our new look site in the Alan Heard Pavilion, customers visited staff to discuss their water supply and usage, accounts, and to win prizes, including our famous 'Phil the Bucket' buckets.

Wendy the Water Warrior and Phil the Bucket also made an appearance for an educational performance about 'Where the water goes' for children and families.

If you missed out on seeing us at the field days, we will also be at the Mallee Machinery Field Days at Speed later this year!

GWMWater staff, Chris and Kate, handing out merchandise to customers at our field days stand.

Customer surveys

Every two years, we conduct customer surveying to make sure we are meeting our customers' changing expectations and improve our understanding of what delivers value for you.

Together with Wallis Social Research, GWMWater will be completing surveys via phone and online methods starting in the next few months.

You may be contacted by us or our partners asking for your feedback.

These surveys are an opportunity to give valuable feedback on our services and your interactions with GWMWater.

In line with our Privacy Policy, your contact information may be shared with our partners for this purpose. To read our Privacy Policy, visit gwmwater.org.au/privacy

Your chance to win \$100 off your next bill!



SCAN ME

Enter our competition by answering the below question for your chance to win \$100 off your next water bill!

What percentage of electricity will be offset by the Nhill Renewable Energy Facility?

Your answer _____

Your GWMWater account number _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Make sure your entry gets to us no later than:

4 pm Friday 30 May 2025

Entries can be:

- > posted to us at PO Box 481, Horsham 3402
- > completed online at gwmwater.org.au/competition
- > submitted by scanning the above QR code

For terms and conditions, as well as recent winners, visit gwmwater.org.au/competition



11 McLachlan St (PO Box 481) Horsham Victoria 3402

Tel: 1800 188 586 Difficulties and Faults (24 Hours)

1300 659 961 Billing and General Enquiries (Office Hours)

Email: info@gwmwater.org.au

Website: gwmwater.org.au