

Each town householder was to be allowed 300 gallons per week, hotels, coffee palaces and bakers 900 gallons per week and every other ratepayer not more than 400 gallons at one time in one cart every nine days, with the carter to sign the book as receipt. The caretaker was to be paid 8/- per day from 7am to 7pm, when the pumps were to be locked.

In January 1901 the Trust sought to have the parishes of Watchupga, Curyo, Kinnabulla, Ballapur and Curyo excised from its responsibility. The Minister refused to agree. Mr. Stuart Murray, Chief Engineer of Water Supply, was sympathetic as was Mr Taverner MP, but the Minister stood firm and it never came to pass. In April, 1901, the Trust sought to form an Urban Trust for the township. The area to be encompassed was the existing Shire sanitary charge area with the inclusion of Campbell and Morrison tanks. Despite concerted efforts over time this never eventuated either.



Water Tower under construction, 1910

The drought of 1902 was the catalyst for increased efforts in having water from the Wimmera Trust area delivered via the Glenorchy Weir and Areegra channel to the northern reaches of the Wimmera Trust area. This brought water into close proximity to the Birchip Trust area. In 1904 an application for £1,000 for construction of the Areegra channel extension to the Natural Waterhole was made to the Water Supply Department. This was followed by a further loan application of £330 for construction of a proposed channel from Kinnabulla to Curyo Railway Station. This latter work was approved but it was not until 1907 that funds were made available for the Areegra extension. A flurry of activity took place as more and more farmers sought to have their properties connected to the channel system. It was also a bonus time for the legal fraternity as easements were required for the passage of the new waterways. Areegra, Gorrie, Willangie and Birchip West channels were the main arteries in the west while the Kaneira channel in the Whirily area was requested for extension. Many of the tanks were sold off to adjoining landowners as were the catchment areas that invariably accompanied most tanks. Farmers were contracted to make channels in their own localities. Trust engineer was instructed to survey the channels, in mile sections, to facilitate construction by farmers.

In March 1907 the Trust held a public meeting to determine the support for a reticulation system for the town. The public meeting agreed to a poll of ratepayers regarding the scheme. Commissioner Goudie and Secretary Irving were deputed to meet with the Minister to obtain his approval, as well as £5,000 to construct the scheme. Mr Irving had replaced Mr Gorrie as Secretary when the latter resigned in November 1903. Time overtook the plan and it was still in abeyance when the Trust, its assets and liabilities, were handed over to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission on 30th June 1908. This latter body was itself superseded in 1984 by the Rural Water Corporation. Since 1995 water for stock and domestic purposes has been controlled by Wimmera-Mallee Water while town supplies are the province of Grampians Water.

The final meeting of the Birchip Waterworks Trust was held on 30th June 1908. Chairman Lockwood presided and Commissioners Goudie, Connelly, Connellan, Barber, Allison, Spittle and Warne were present. After the usual congratulatory speeches lauding the Minister, staff and fellow Commissioners, it was agreed that the Secretary be granted a bonus of £12 and a certificate under seal of the Trust. It was unanimously agreed that Commissioner Lockwood be presented with a framed suitably prepared address, under seal of the Trust, for his services to the Trust. This gesture seemed to be rather extravagant, considering the short term that the Trust existed and even shorter time that Commissioner Lockwood served as Chairman.