

BACKWASH

YOUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY IRRIGATION AUSTRALIA.

April 2008

www.irrigation.org.au



Know-how for Horticulture™

IN THIS ISSUE

- Board news
- Regional roundup
- Professional development
- Around industry
- Job spot
- For the diary
- Smart Approved WaterMark
- Handy Links
- Regional contacts

IRRIGATION AUSTRALIA 2008 CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION - 3 WEEKS TO GO

Register now for Irrigation Australia 2008 Exhibition. If you haven't registered for the exhibition and conference yet there is still time. For exhibition goers, registration is free and can be done easily online at <http://www.irrigationaustralia.com.au> Do it now while it is top of mind! Exhibition space is almost sold out and there promises to be new products, technologies and discussion for anyone involved in irrigation. For conference goers, go to www.irrigationaustralia.com.au

Minister to open Irrigation Australia 2008. The Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, will be opening *Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition* 20 May and presenting the keynote address. This is an ideal opportunity to hear firsthand the Government's position on the implementation of the \$10 billion National Water Plan and a new agenda in urban water and demand management.

Snapping Water at Work: national photo competition. Time to go through your irrigation photos and choose your favourite photo for the Irrigation Australia Photo Competition for 2008, being sponsored by Irrigear Stores Ltd. The competition will be held as part of Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition. Four categories -

people and irrigation; irrigation and the environment; irrigation efficiency, rural; and irrigation efficiency, urban. Each of the category winners will receive a \$500 prize, while the overall national winner will receive an additional \$2,000 and the runner up an additional \$500. Entries close 16 April. For details and to enter go to www.irrigation.org.au or email jann.oconnor@irrigation.org.au

BOARD NEWS

Meeting with Penny Wong. IAL Chairman, Stephen Mills, and CEO, Jolyon Burnett, met with Minister Penny Wong and her principal water adviser, Tim Fisher, last month as part of a comprehensive round of meetings in Canberra. The meeting covered a wide range of topics including negotiations with Victoria over the new national water plan, the government's entry into the water market with its \$50 million initiative to buy water for the environment, the commitment to continued investment in irrigation efficiency both at the system level and on-farm, and the skills shortage and the need for professional recognition in the industry. Minister Wong indicated that the government is intending to be active in the water market and that securing water for environmental works is a priority.

National irrigator body. IAL attended a meeting of more than 60 irrigator representatives from around Australia as part of an initiative by the NSW Irrigators Council to establish a national body to represent irrigators. A clear distinction was recognised by the group between Irrigation Australia Limited, which represents the full value chain of the irrigation industry nationally, and the new body which will represent irrigation farmers only. An interim board was established to drive the goal of establishing the body by 1 July this year.

Water industry skills forum. The IAL CEO and National Training Manager attended a water industry skills forum in Canberra hosted by the Australian Water Association, the Water Services Association of Australia and the National Water Commission. Minister for Water, Penny Wong, addressed the forum and recognised the significant challenge facing the sector. A number of actions were agreed, including a commitment to look again at the irrigation industry's access to assisted migration programs and an announcement of new funding for training across the sector.

New constitution – what do you think? Copies of the draft constitution and an indicative fee structure for new membership categories are available on the IAL [website](#) or from the IAL office. If you have any feedback there is still time to let your association know before a finalised version is put to members at the Extraordinary General Meeting 19 May in Melbourne. Contact the CEO or national board directors with any questions or concerns they may have. The board is hoping for a strong turnout at the EGM and at the Conference and Exhibition as it is the first major event for the new organisation.

IAL info. Contact the IAL national office for information about Irrigation Australia. Your IAL interim board members are:

Stephen Mills – chair
Peter Toome - vice chair
Colin Campbell
Elaine Gardiner
Matthew Durack
Trevor Guest
Peter Boettcher
Stewart Ellis
Karen Murday

Rod Carr from the Department of Environment and Water Resources is the government observer and Des Horton and Tony Oaks have been co-opted until the new constitution is finalised.

REGIONAL NEWS

News on activities from regional committees around Australia. You can keep up with IAL and industry news in your area and have your say about the future of your industry by attending local events and meetings. Brief reports of regional committee activities are below. Contact your region to see how you can get involved or contact the IAL head office to find your local IAL regional representative.

NT. For information on activities in NT or to get involved with the local committee, contact Peter Giles at Oasis Irrigation, phone 08 8932 4141, email petergiles@oasisirrigation.com.au

South Australia. For information about this month's regional committee meeting contact Noel Johnston, [email](#)

South East Queensland. South East Queensland. The next regional event is a breakfast meeting to be held at 7:30 am, Tuesday April 8, at BTP Technology and Conference Centre, 1 Clunies Ross Court, Eight Mile Plains. This will be the Irrigation Australia SEQ Annual General Meeting. Guest Speaker is Kay Gardiner; Director Demand Efficiency and Substitution, Queensland Water Commission. Cost is \$15.00 pp. RSVP by 1 April 2008 to Sid Dyer, phone 0428 290 542 or Michael Barker, phone 0413 613 346

Darling Downs. For information about the next meeting contact David Wigginton, phone 07 48311711, mobile 0427 789 498, email wiggind@usq.edu.au

North Queensland. Date of next meeting to be advised. For information about the committee's activities contact Barbara Moloney, phone 07 4721 5811, email barbara.moloney@irrigation.org.au

Northwest NSW. For information about the next regional committee meeting contact Peter Taylor, email ptaylor@smk.com.au

Melbourne. For information about the region's next meeting contact Des Horton, phone 03 9313 8508, email dhorton@citywestwater.com.au

Western Australia. The next State Executive meeting will be held at 7:30am Tuesday 15 April at the Metro Inn, South Perth. For more information on WA activities contact Doug Hall, phone 08 9474 9089, mobile 0407 701 513, or email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au.

MEMBERSHIP

The formation of irrigation Australia Limited is an exciting development for members of the IAA and ANCID. Your membership will be automatically transferred to the new organisation. Membership renewals will be sent out in June 2008 for a new financial year membership cycle. It is also an ideal time to encourage colleagues, customers, suppliers and even competitors to join the new body and support the Australian irrigation industry in these challenging times. For a membership application form, go to www.irrigation.org.au.

Welcome to new members for March:

Manojbhai Kaswala, North Altona, Victoria
Adrian Tait, Allwest Reticulation Services, Attadale, WA
Bill Williamson, Narromine, NSW

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CID Exam Preparation Course. The CID program is not course based but IAL will be conducting a two-day course to prepare people for the Certified Irrigation Designer (CID) exams. ***The course is specifically aimed at those people who are sitting either their Step 2 or Step 3 Exams.*** The course will run on Sunday and Monday, 18 and 19 May at CAE, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne. Course fee is \$600 (GST Free) and is immediately before Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition in Melbourne. For more information and a registration form contact Jann O'Connor, phone 02 9476 0142 or visit our [website](#)

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Course dates: Adelaide 15 & 16 April 2008; Melbourne 16 & 17 April 2008 and 7 & 8 May 2008; and Brisbane 29 & 30 April 2008 and Perth 20 & 21 August 2008.

Other courses run on demand. For information contact Catherine Parbery, IAL head office, phone 02 9476 0142, email certification@irrigation.org.au.

CID exams advance notice. The next round of CID exams will be held 18 June 2008. For more details contact Catherine Parbery, phone 02 9476 0142, email <mailto:certification@irrigation.org.au>

Please note the final round of exams for 2008 will be held 22 October 2008.

Enrol NOW for online learning. IAL and River Murray Training (RMT) Pty Ltd are offering online learning for the skill sets required for Certified Irrigation Agronomist and Certified Irrigation Manager. Once you gain competency in a skill set and have three years practical experience you will be eligible to apply for IAL certification in the relevant credential. Online learners will receive a Study Guide that provides information you about the online classroom, how to use the RMT Irrigation e-Learning Centre and requirements to successfully complete the training. Along with other participants, you will be able to join a virtual classroom, where you and the module facilitator participate in a live online classroom for presentations and discussions using your computer and a headset and microphone. Cost is: Certified Irrigation Agronomist skill set, \$1800 +GST; and Certified Irrigation Manager skill set, \$1500 +GST. (Applications for individual units will be accepted if vacancies exist. Unit price is \$300.) For information go to [website](#).

Professional development for irrigation trainers. IAL is running a one-day professional development workshop for irrigation trainers, Monday 19 May, in Melbourne before Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition. Covers innovative approaches to delivering irrigation training and familiarisation with the new IAL learning pathways and resources. Cost is \$150 and includes lunch and a copy of the CIO manual and evidence guide. For information and an application form go to [website](#).

Certification explained. IAL has a new brochure available that explains and promotes the certification program. It is available as a downloadable file on the IAL website Contact [Alison Carmichael](#) if you would like printed copies.

Rain Bird Academy. From 23 to 24 June Rain Bird is holding a professional training camp for gold course and turf site supers, and irrigation contractors and dealers at the Gold Coast. Qualified trainers will be presenting sessions ranging from irrigation system troubleshooting to golf central control software to basic irrigation design to irrigation efficiency. Download an enrolment form from www.rainbird.com.au or email info@rainbird.com.au for more information.

Urban Best Management Practice Guidelines. The essential guide for the commercial irrigation sector. Your concise guide to best management practice for designing, installing, maintaining, and operating irrigation systems in an urban setting. The Guidelines now include a handy checklist for assessing system compliance. Get your copy now from the IAL: \$22.00 inc. GST for members and \$33.00 inc. GST for non members. Call 02 9476 0142 to order your copy. A simpler document aimed at the home gardener has also been produced. This would be suitable for IAL members to distribute to the general public and domestic customers and a print ready version can be downloaded from the IAL [website](#)

Applications open for Nuffield Scholarships. Applications opened 1 April 2008, for the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships, which will give 16 of Australia's primary producers the chance to travel internationally and investigate key issues in agriculture. The scholarships are valued at \$25,000 and are for travel in 2009. They are only available to practicing farmers or farm managers. Winners will be selected for their farming and leadership capabilities, and potential to make a valuable contribution to Australian agriculture. Applications close 30 June 2008. Application forms are available from Nuffield Australia, phone 03 5480 0755, email enquiries@nuffield.com.au, website www.nuffield.com.au

Study Tour – UAE (Dubai), Israel and Spain. The Recycled Water in Horticulture program is organising a tour to Dubai, Israel and Spain to examine the use of alternative water sources in agricultural, urban and industrial contexts. As part of the tour, marketing opportunities to overcome barriers to the adoption of alternative water source innovations and broader sustainability issues will also be investigated. Expressions of interest must be received by 1 May 2008. Interested? For information email studytour@arris.com.au or go to website www.recycledwater.com.au/studytours

Groundwater Short Courses. Upcoming courses and workshops include: 6th ASR National Workshop: Management of Aquifer Recharge, Storage and Treatment; 17th Getting to Know Groundwater and Surfacewater; and 35th Australian Groundwater School. For more information go to [website](#)

Call for papers; Young Professionals Forum. A one-day workshop will be held as part of the 59th IEC and 20th International Congress of ICID at Lahore, Pakistan, 13-19 October 2008. The aim of the workshop is to discuss how the coming generation of water engineers should be trained and can contribute to education, knowledge and capacity building. Papers are invited on: use of information and communication technologies; education and capacity building in the water sector; using professional networks and associations to strengthen the water sector; and integrated water resources management. Deadline for paper proposals of 400 words stating scope, main question and conclusions is April 30 2008 to be sent to the Chairman, ICID-YPF, Ali Reza Salamat, email a.salamat@unesco.org. For information go to [website](#).

Catch Cans. To order catch cans go to [website](#)

AROUND INDUSTRY

Victoria comes on board with water plan. Relief all round at last week's COAG meeting when Victoria gave up its year-long opposition to the National Plan for Water Security and signed up. This paves the way for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission to be brought together in a new national body, which will set a cap on the amount of water to be taken out of rivers and groundwater systems, and approve a new basin-wide plan to provide for drinking water needs for Adelaide and other towns reliant on the system. The States' role in setting annual water allocations, decisions on natural resource management across the basin and a new role to provide input to the basin-wide plan will continue. The Commonwealth has also agreed in principle to invest up to \$1 billion in Stage 2 of the Foodbowl Project in Victoria to return 100 billion litres of water to the Murray River and an equivalent volume of water to farmers in the Goulburn region.

Groundwater action plan funding. The Federal Government announced last month that it would be funding \$7.5 million from the National Groundwater Action Plan for three new projects to improve groundwater management in Australia. [Website](#)

50-year water plan for southeast Queensland. The Queensland Water Commission has just released its draft strategy for the next 50 years, which offers a responsible water supply guarantee to meet the future economic, social and environmental needs of the fastest growing region in Australia. It is seeking public input until July 31, to be considered before the strategy is finalised with the State Government and the Council of Mayors (SEQ). To see the strategy go to www.qwc.qld.gov.au.

Melbourne water consumption down. Figures from the Victorian Water Ministry show that Melbourne reduced its total water consumption from December to end of February to the lowest level since 1982-83. Consumption was 102 billion litres compared with 111.8 billion litres at the same time last year, a reduction of 9%. It was also 22 % lower than the average of the past five years.

Community beats Target 140. Southeast Queenslanders, who are subject to level 6 water restrictions, have cut their daily average water use to 133 L a day, according to daily water use consumption figures released for the week ending 20 March. Consumption figures were calculated using data supplied by SEQ under Level 6 restrictions: Brisbane City, Ipswich City, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Logan City, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council and Somerset Regional Council.

Green energy challenge. The Queensland Government, looking for ways to completely offset carbon emissions from the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant, put out a challenge to Australia's green energy industry to completely offset carbon emissions from. The government wants the plant to be powered by 100% carbon neutral energy and will be seeking expressions of interest to do this in April.

Tasmania suffers from low rainfall. Low rainfall in the Apple Isle is causing concern to the irrigation industry. This year inflows to storages were less than 20% those normally received and less than half of the lowest previously experienced. As a result storages have fallen 11%.

Water for Growth in the Bundaberg Region. Looking for an opportunity that will enable you to take your agricultural enterprise to the next level? Bundaberg could be the answer. Since construction of SunWater's 300,000 ML Paradise Dam and 20,000 ML Kirar Weir, Bundaberg can now offer additional water allocation. This is the only new water allocation in the country. If you are interested in buying or leasing water, contact SunWater, phone 07 4132 6221, email jeanette.sutherland@sunwater.com.au

Shift from irrigation to dryland agriculture. Figures from ABARE, released at Outlook '08 Conference, predict that one result of reduced water being available in the Murray-Darling Basin will be a 15% shift out of irrigation into dryland farming in the next few years. The figures, based on modelling, also show a reduction in the area of irrigated land in the basin and the amount of water available to it and increase farm costs because of the management needed to deal with less water. For information go to [website](#)

Tasmania establishes irrigation board. The Tasmanian Government announced that it would be establishing the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board to facilitate urgent water developments. The aim is for these developments to help drought-proof Tasmania. The initiative is part of the Government's \$80 million commitment to foster major water developments around the State. At present the board is assessing the feasibility of projects in the Midlands and Southern Midlands, the North-East Central Highlands and North-West.

Urban water market: how practical? In a speech last month Treasury Secretary, Ken Henry, advocated a new system of water trading for Australian cities based on market principles. He suggests that a better way of supplying water to urban users would be to control its use with price rather than with rationing through water restrictions. In this way, individuals would make their own decisions about what they use water for and how much they use, knowing that the more they use the more it would cost. One consequence could be an urban water market where users, including individual households, buy and sell water. A [research paper](#), just released by the Productivity Commission, supports Ken Henry's suggestion.

Low allocations for southern irrigators. According to Waterfind, continuing dry weather across the southern Murray-Darling Basin has resulted in low allocations to irrigators. In the Murray Valley, high security allocations will remain at 25% of entitlement; Murrumbidgee Valley high security allocations will remain at 90% and general security licence holders will remain at 13%; while in the Lower Darling, high security licence holders will remain on 100% of entitlement and general security licence holders 50%. Goulburn-Murray Water announced last month a 1% increase to 55% in the Goulburn system while allocations for all other GMW systems remain the same.

Water management and technology mission to the US. Austrade is looking to take advantage of Australia's water management expertise by organising a water management and technology mission to the US in June. The US is currently facing acute water resource challenges across a number of regions which provides export opportunities for Australian companies with product and service solutions related to water management. The US Federal Government recently passed the \$23 billion Water Resources Development Act and estimates that \$1 trillion in investment is required to rehabilitate and update an ageing water infrastructure. The mission will be visiting 3 US cities (Atlanta, Washington DC and Phoenix) and company-specific visit programs will be organised by Austrade providing the opportunity to meet with key decision makers in the World Bank, federal, state, and local governments, as well as customers in the industrial, agricultural and residential segments. For more information about the Mission please contact Austrade's US Agribusiness Team member, Laki Kondylas at laki.kondylas@austrade.gov.au

Peak industry groups endorse the National Water Initiative. Peak industry groups attending the National Water Commission's Stakeholder Reference Group meeting in February commended the Federal Government's renewed commitment to water reform and its decisions to tackle this challenge in the context of climate change and to purchase water from willing sellers. The Group also expressed unanimous support for the National Water Initiative (NWI) as a way for progressing further water reform. Members include the Australian Bankers' Association, Australian Water Association, A3P (Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council), Business Council of Australia, Irrigation Australia Limited, National Farmers' Federation, and Queensland Farmers' Federation. For information go to www.nwc.gov.au

2050 urban water vision. The NWC's *Urban Water Advisory Group (UWAG)*, which is working on a vision for urban water has set out interventions and measures needed to achieve the 2050 vision statement. The group has identified four broad areas that need further attention to progress sustainable urban water management: reliability of water supply; institutional reform (to amongst other things, encourage innovation); encouraging markets and sophisticated pricing, and measures to improve environmental sustainability (including Water Sensitive Urban Design and climate change and greenhouse gas production and stewardship). These areas will be addressed in the vision statement, which will be completed this year.

MARKETPLACE

IrriCad database entry. As the distributor of IrriCad Software in Australia, Netafim Australia is offering its services to any business that would like their product and specifications to be added into the IrriCad Database for use by designers worldwide. Databases will be separated between manufacturers and available for download via the IrriCad website. For information on this service and costs, please contact Gennaro Vellotti, phone 08 8267 422 or 0408 822 581, or email: gvellotti@netafim.com.au

PEOPLE

Peter Cullen. Tributes have come from many areas after the death of Peter Cullen last month. While some in the irrigation industry may have seen his comments as a threat to further irrigation development, he championed the one avenue which will provide certainty to us all, and that was science. He understood that scientific fact was meaningless unless validated by community understanding and agreement. Peter was an inaugural board member of the CRC for Irrigation Futures, which according to Matthew Durack, who was CEO at the time, demonstrated to him that Peter did see a future for irrigation in this country. IAL extends its sympathy to Peter's family. (To read John Williams' eulogy to Peter go to [website](#))

JOB SPOT

Industry Development Officer. Irrigation Australia Limited is seeking an industry development officer to promote best practice irrigation methods in the South Australian Region on a part-time basis (3 to 4 days per week). The role is to facilitate the development of the irrigation industry in South Australia. You will be involved in interaction with irrigation business and other stakeholders to encourage adoption and communicate the benefits of best practice. This will be achieved through on-site visits, workshops, seminars or other communication mechanisms. You will be part of a professional organisation under the direction of the SA Regional Chairperson and enjoy existing support from a national network of IDOs.

The right candidate will ideally have: extensive experience or qualification in irrigation management practices; understanding of irrigation and natural resource management issues; excellent verbal and written communication and presentation skills; ability to work independently and as part of a team; and a current drivers licence and the ability to travel as required. Closing date for applications is 11 April. For more information contact Jolyon Burnett, email info@irrigation.org.au

FOR THE DIARY

Irrigation Australia Conference and Exhibition 2008. To be held 20 – 22 May 2008 at Melbourne Exhibition Centre. The biggest irrigation event in the Southern Hemisphere. Don't miss it! The latest in irrigation technology and services will be on show at the exhibition. A great lineup of over 60 speakers, including Minister for Water and Climate Change, Senator Penny Wong. For bookings or information, contact Event Manager Robby Clark, phone 02 9556 7992, email irrigation@eft.com.au or visit [website](#)

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Call for papers: 3rd African Regional Conference. Being held in Abuja, Nigeria, 11 to 17 October, 2009. Conference theme is *The Role of Irrigation and Drainage in Food Security: towards attaining the millennium development goals in Africa*. Submit a 200-400 word abstract electronically by 30 June 30 with the following information at the top of the page: paper title; author and co-author names and affiliations (contact author first); address, phone, fax and e-mail for each author. Use author's name as filename. Email to D. B. Madu; nincid@icid2009.org; nincid@yahoo.co.uk or dbmadu@icid.org. Go to website <http://www.icid2009.org> for more information.

SMART APPROVED WATERMARK

Hear about the scheme's latest developments, ask questions and tell us what you think about Smart Approved WaterMark at the scheme's first annual Smart Approved WaterMark forum for industry stakeholders. The forum will be held in conjunction with the Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition, 11am – 12.30pm on Thursday 22 May at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. You must register your participation by Monday 12 May 2008 as venue space is limited. Please contact the national office by phone 02 9290 3322 or email info@smartwatermark.info The full agenda and more information on the forum can be found at www.smartwatermark.info/forum.

HANDY LINKS

How much water is used by which agricultural industry? For the latest figures go to the *Water Use on Australian Farms* report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It shows that the greatest proportion of water continues to be used on pasture. Go to [website](#)

REGIONAL COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Backwash is a monthly newsletter published by Irrigation Australia reporting on developments in the irrigation and related industries. For more information or to contribute article ideas contact anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au

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