

# BACKWASH

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

September 2008 No 9  
[www.irrigation.org.au](http://www.irrigation.org.au)



Know-how for Horticulture™

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## REGISTER NOW

Places still available in Sydney IEC course being held at Penrith 10 and 11 September. For information and to register go to [website](#)

## BOARD NEWS

**IAL AGM, workshop and industry dinner.** Have you made your travel plans? The 2008 IAL AGM will be held in Canberra on the morning of Tuesday 16 September. It will be preceded by an industry dinner the Monday evening before and followed by a workshop on irrigation innovation. The dinner speaker for Monday night is Professor John Langford from University of Melbourne who will share with us the lessons he has learned about water management over the last three decades.

**Board elections.** Don't forget to get your ballot papers for the Board election in by COB Friday 5 September. Only financial members can vote but there is still time to become financial by the time we receive your papers if you contact head office now. The Chair of the new Board will be elected by the Directors at a Board meeting to follow the AGM.

**New commissioners for NWC.** Congratulations to Elaine Gardiner from WA who is one of the new Commissioners for the National Water Commission. Chris Davis, former CEO of Australian Water Commission and Laurie Arthur of National Farmers Federation are also new appointees.

**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.

## **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](mailto:petergiles@oasisirrigation.com.au)

**South Australia.** This month's meeting is 6.00 pm 16 September at the Loxton Club, Bookpurnong Tce, Loxton.

Last month a combined meeting of SA IAL and the Turf Grass Association SA discussed "where are we now and where should we be in ten years time?" The consensus was there is now an opportunity to develop a strategy for modifying the Irrigated Public Open Space program for domestic irrigators. This would then ensure that each sector was being treated equitably.

In another joint activity last month, the Horticultural Media Association of SA with support from the SA Regional Committee held an informative night with guest speaker John Brennan, Water Efficiency Planner for the Western Australian Water Corporation,

who discussed the dramatic turnaround achieved by Perth in home garden water use while maintaining a valuable garden related industry.

**South East Queensland.** The next meeting is Tuesday 9 September at Landcentre, Woolloongabba starting at 5.15 pm. Please come along and have your say. For information contact the secretariat, phone 0413 334 679, email [david.jessen@irrigation.org.au](mailto:david.jessen@irrigation.org.au)

**Darling Downs.** For information about the next meeting contact David Wigginton, email [david.wigginton@spin.net.au](mailto:david.wigginton@spin.net.au)

**Northwest NSW.** Big event for the regional committee last month was the *Energy in Irrigation* held at Goondiwindi. Look in the summer edition of *Irrigation Australia* for a roundup of papers presented. For information on regional activities contact Peter Taylor, email [ptaylor@smk.com.au](mailto:ptaylor@smk.com.au)

**Melbourne and Southern Victoria Region.** For information about regional activities contact Des Horton, email [dhorton@citywestwater.com.au](mailto:dhorton@citywestwater.com.au).

**Western Australia.** The next State Executive meeting will be held at 7:30 am Tuesday 16 August 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](mailto:doug.hall@irrigation.org.au).

## MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, don't forget, and encourage others also. For a membership application form, go to [www.irrigation.org.au](http://www.irrigation.org.au).

Welcome to new members for August:

Edward Beacham, Hillston NSW  
Andrew Millar, Allied Irrigation, Anketell WA  
Terry O'Connor, Irrigear Stores, Mornington Victoria  
Rachel Poulter, Cleveland Queensland

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Irrigation Efficiency courses 2008.** This course provides training for three units of competency from the Certificate III in Irrigation: RTE3605A – troubleshoot irrigation systems; RTE3607A – measure irrigation delivery system performance; and RTE3611A – operate pressurised irrigation systems. The course trains people who are involved in operating or managing landscape irrigation systems to evaluate their systems for efficiency, adjust irrigation schedules if necessary, conduct basic maintenance on equipment and know when to get expert help. For information and to enrol go to the website. Before enrolling make sure you read the Student Information.

**Next courses:** Being held in Sydney 10 & 11 September; Adelaide and Perth 30 September & 1 October. Other courses run on demand. For information contact Catherine Parbery, IAL head office, phone 02 9476 0142, email [certification@irrigation.org.au](mailto:certification@irrigation.org.au).

**CID exams advance notice.** You can register for the next round of CID exams being held 22 October 2008. Closing date for applications 26 September. For more details go to website

<http://www.irrigation.org.au/index.cfm?event=public.page&pageuid=69688C96-1708-51EB-A6CACB1FC691926B>

**CID renewals due.** All CID renewals close 30 September. If you have not sent your renewal in contact Catherine, phone 02 9476 0142, email [info@irrigation.org.au](mailto:info@irrigation.org.au).

**Keeping your certification up to date.** If you hold IAL certification in any category you will need to show periodically that you are keeping your knowledge and skills up to date. You can do this by earning the required CPD points in the required timeframe for your certification to remain active. There are two different, though similar, sets of CPD guidelines. One set is for Certified Irrigation Designers which are assessed annually and the other is for all remaining certifications, assessed every two years. IAL will conduct random audits of 5% of all CPD returns each year. Details about these requirements are available on the IAL website

<http://www.irrigation.org.au/index.cfm?event=public.page&pageuid=3B813FF2-1708-51EB-A6C6FB6D98EA24EB>

**Certification ID cards – got yours yet?** The certification ID cards, which were launched at Irrigation Australia 2008, have been a great success. If you haven't got yours yet, just send a digital photo to IAL head office and it will be mailed back to you, email [training@irrigation.org.au](mailto:training@irrigation.org.au) HO.

**Agri-Food Skills International Fellowship.** Apply for the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council and International Specialised Skills Institute Inc inaugural international fellowship. The fellowship is aimed at established, highly capable and experienced industry practitioners who may have broad technical expertise or a record of achievement in their fields. It will promote the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and innovative ideas overseas, and to see these findings delivering benefits to the Agri-Food Industry in Australia. The fellowship is valued at \$10,000 and will enable the award winner to undertake an overseas study program. Entries close 5 September. Go to website [http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au/display\\_announce.php?id=2](http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au/display_announce.php?id=2)

**NCEA irrigation training.** NCEA is running irrigation training. The workshop fees include workbook, morning/afternoon teas and lunches. For information contact Craig Baillie [bailliec@usq.edu.au](mailto:bailliec@usq.edu.au)

Surface Irrigation Optimisation Workshop, 3 – 4 September 2008, USQ Toowoomba  
Centre Pivot/Lateral Move Workshop, 17 – 18 September 2008, USQ, Toowoomba  
Travelling Gun Irrigator Workshop, 8 – 9 October 2008, USQ, Toowoomba

**Groundwater Short Courses.** 3rd New Zealand Getting to Know Groundwater & Surfacewater Wednesday 15-17 October 2008, Mancan House Conference Centre, Christchurch, NZ

[http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses\\_and\\_conferences/courses/flyer-gtkgs-2008-2ed.pdf](http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses_and_conferences/courses/flyer-gtkgs-2008-2ed.pdf)

36th Australian Groundwater School Monday 3 - 7 November 2008, DPI&F Conference Centre, Brisbane, QLD

[http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses\\_and\\_conferences/courses/flyer-agws-08.pdf](http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses_and_conferences/courses/flyer-agws-08.pdf)

For information on all 2009 courses go to

[http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses\\_and\\_conferences/cgs%20groundwater%20short%20course%20program%202009.pdf](http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses_and_conferences/cgs%20groundwater%20short%20course%20program%202009.pdf)

**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 [www.irrigation.org.au](http://www.irrigation.org.au)

**Catch Cans.** To order catch cans go to [www.irrigation.org.au](http://www.irrigation.org.au)

## STATE ROUNDUP

**Murray system inflows below average.** Murray system inflows for July were about 300 GL, higher than the record low of 135 GL in 2006, but still well below the July long term average of 1 200 GL. During July, the increased flows from the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers partially refilled Lake Mulwala. Storage in Dartmouth Reservoir and Hume Dam increased to about 19% and 22.3% of capacity respectively. For information go to [www.mdbc.gov.au/rmw/river\\_information\\_centre](http://www.mdbc.gov.au/rmw/river_information_centre)

**Victorian legislation limits water purchases.** Changes made recently to legislation in Victoria mean that the amount of Victorian water that can be owned by bodies that do not have irrigation land in the State (“non water users”) is limited to 10%. According to media reports this means that the Federal Government’s purchases will be limited because non-water users have bought 7% of Victoria’s irrigation water. Some in the industry are criticizing this as a restraint on trade.

**Riverland Response Centre opened.** Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, who officially opened the Riverland Response Centre in Berri last month said the centre will be very important in keeping the local community up to date with information and services to help them manage the current difficult conditions. Experienced rural counselors and support staff are available to answer any questions people might have, or help them access the relevant services they may need. The centre is at 7 Wilson Street, Berri, phone 08 8595 2351.

**Queensland water buyback for Murray-Darling.** Last month the Federal Government announced a new tender to buy back water in the Queensland section of the Murray-Darling Basin to return to the rivers. The \$50 million tender is the first part of a \$350 million committed to buying water in Queensland announced at last month's Council of Australian Governments meeting. Not everyone is happy though with some areas where the local economy relies heavily on irrigation saying that the prospect of losing water would be a catastrophe. For information go to [www.environment.gov.au/water](http://www.environment.gov.au/water).

**Water buyback not popular with irrigators.** Irrigators say that the Federal Government's decision in August to target whole irrigation communities with its buyback scheme is a knee jerk reaction that ignores its potential impact on rural areas. They warn that targeting whole irrigation communities will affect not just irrigators themselves but those who service them and retailers where irrigators spend money. The government has also allocated more money which it will spend more quickly than originally planned to buy back water. And it says will help state governments buy farms with water allocations.

**Comments wanted on concept statement.** There are a number of opportunities to comment on the SA Concept Statement for the Draft Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse. An irrigation industry workshop will be held 9.30-12, September 10 at Murray Bridge Racing Club or you can return comment by written submission or attend public forums to be held later in September. For more information contact Bianca Lewis, phone 08 8532 1432.

**Allocations vary in SMDB.** In August Goulburn-Murray Water announced that all its regulated water systems have a zero allocation of high-reliability water shares. South Australian farmers have received 6% of their entitlement, while irrigators with high-security Murrumbidgee licences have been allocated 40% of their water entitlements and those in the Murray Irrigation area 25% [www.waterfind.com.au/docs/waterreport.pdf](http://www.waterfind.com.au/docs/waterreport.pdf).

**10% of world's food grown with recycled water.** A study by the [International Water Management Institute](http://www.iwmi.org/) (IWMI) – a World Bank-backed research agency based in Sri Lanka – has found about 20% of the world's food is grown in urban areas. Half of the crops (or 10% of the world's food) are grown using recycled water. The advantage of using recycled water is that it comes with free fertiliser in the form of the nitrates and phosphates; the disadvantage is that much it also contains heavy metals, pathogenic bacteria and worms. According to the report, in Faisalabad in Pakistan recycled water is so highly thought of that untreated sewage is auctioned to farmers during droughts

while in the Ghanaian capital Accra, vegetables are grown on urban fields irrigated with tanker loads of wastewater that is untreated because the city's sewage treatment works long since ceased to function. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14545-worlds-farmers-turn-to-raw-sewage-for-irrigation.html>

**FMIT taken over after 112 years.** Last month the Victorian Government appointed Lower Murray Water (LMW) to take over First Mildura Irrigation Trust (FMIT) because of "FMIT's failure to comply with financial and governance responsibilities and its viability as a long-term separate entity". According to the Government FMIT made an improper investment from funds that were borrowed from the State Government for upgrades to irrigation systems but were instead invested in the US sub-prime mortgage market. A recent report also found that FMIT was not viable in the long-term because of its small size, which made it vulnerable to the effects of reduced rainfall, leading to reduced allocations and therefore revenue. Despite protests from a number of FMIT's 1600 customers, the government has confirmed that they will become customers of LMW and staff will be employed by Lower Murray Water. <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-water/mildura-water-authority-to-be-taken-over.html>

## PEOPLE

**New General Manager for Rain Bird Australia.** Rain Bird announced last month that it had appointed John Wright-Smith to the position of General Manager, Rain Bird Australia Pty Ltd. John's territory responsibilities cover Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. He comes to Rain Bird with a strong background in product and system sales, contracting, training and design, having been both a customer and a service provider. One of his main roles is to implement effective sales and marketing strategies for the Rain Bird range of commercial, residential, golf and agricultural irrigation products. He can be contacted at [jwsmith@rainbird.com](mailto:jwsmith@rainbird.com), mobile 0417 724 626.

## JOB SPOT

**Looking for sales staff?** Sales recruitment agency, BTA Australia, has over 15 years experience in providing sales candidates to a range of companies from large to small. If you're on the lookout for a highly skilled sales professional, BTA currently has an abundance of qualified candidates with solid irrigation experience on its books. For information contact Mitchell Flood, phone 02 89184013, email [mfl@btasalesrecruit.com.au](mailto:mfl@btasalesrecruit.com.au)

**Consultants needed in Vietnam.** The HANOITC GROUP, an expert provider organisation in Vietnam is tendering for an ADB project, Strengthening Water Management and Irrigation Systems Rehabilitation Project. It is looking for consultants to participate on this project. Experts required are: Team Leader and Water Resources Development Specialists, Water Sector Tertiary Education Specialists, Civil and Facilities Development Specialists, Agricultural and Resource Economists, hydraulic Structures Engineers, Environmental Specialists and Institutional and Social Development Specialists. Interested? Send a brief

Capability Statement and CV to (Ms) Thu Trang [dangtrang@hanoitcedu.com](mailto:dangtrang@hanoitcedu.com)

## FOR THE DIARY

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**Riverland field days.** The field days will be run 17 and 18 September at the Barmera field day site. Featured are the Improving Irrigation Efficiency projects at Irrigation Efficiency Avenue. The avenue consists of irrigation related businesses dedicated to irrigation technology and efficiency.

**NCEA irrigation training.** NCEA is running irrigation training. The workshop fees include workbook, morning/afternoon teas and lunches. For information contact Craig Baillie [bailliec@usq.edu.au](mailto:bailliec@usq.edu.au)

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**Onsite and Decentralised Sewerage Conference.** Being held 12 to 15 October 2008 at Benalla, Victoria. Conference theme is *Achieving best practice by 2012: how do we do it?* For information go to website [www.awa.asn.au](http://www.awa.asn.au)

**The Urban Greenscapes Symposium 2009.** Being held at the Canberra Convention Centre 17 February 2009. The symposium will highlight the benefit of trees and plants in the urban environment and aims to create a Green Paper on what is required to get universal government support for increased urban greening. An excellent opportunity to expose the role of landscape and irrigation industries in delivering solutions to urban heater island effect and limiting climate change via increased urban plantings. For more information phone NGIA 02 9876 5200.

## SAWM UPDATE

The deadline for applications to be considered at the scheme's next Expert Panel is 5 September. More than 150 products and services have been approved by the Smart WaterMark scheme. For more information visit the [website](#) or contact the national office: 02 9290 3322 [email](#)

## STANDARDS

Following renewed interest in standards from members IAL has decided to form a special interest group for members interested in standards, following the format established by the Board to deal with other similar issues. Members interested in participating in the special interest group are invited to email their interest to Jeremy Cape at [Jeremy@capeability.biz](mailto:Jeremy@capeability.biz). This special interest group will replace the current standards subcommittee.

Two more standards documents have been added to the IAL website for downloading; a report of the most recent meeting of ISO TC 23 SC 18 and a file of the technical definitions developed by the subcommittee.

## HANDY LINKS

**Urban Water Pricing.** National Water Commission paper on approaches to Urban Water Pricing assesses three broad alternative approaches to charging for urban water services - the current arrangements, scarcity pricing, and urban user trading or a tradeable entitlement regime - against a number of criteria including economic

efficiency, revenue adequacy, flexibility, ease of operation and administrative simplicity, transparency and equity. It has implications for those sectors of the irrigation industry that rely on urban water supply and experiencing the current arrangements of water restrictions. The paper is available at [www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/735-approaches-to-urban-water-pricing.asp](http://www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/735-approaches-to-urban-water-pricing.asp) <<http://www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/735-approaches-to-urban-water-pricing.asp>>

**MDBC statistical profile.** Released in August was the first Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication to treat the basin as one discreet statistical area. *Water and the Murray-Darling Basin - A Statistical Profile (2000-01 to 2005-06)* presents a range of water, social, environmental and economic statistics relating to the Murray-Darling Basin. Go to [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4610.0.55.007](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4610.0.55.007)

## REGIONAL COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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Peter Giles  
[petergiles@oasisirrigation.com.au](mailto:petergiles@oasisirrigation.com.au)

## **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](mailto:anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au)

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