



# BACKWASH

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

December 2008 No 12  
[www.irrigation.org.au](http://www.irrigation.org.au)



*Know-how for Horticulture™*

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS to all our readers and their families and best wishes for a safe holiday season**

**IAL office holiday hours.** The IAL office will be closed from 5 pm 23 December and will reopen Monday 5 January 2009.

**IRRIGATION AUSTRALIA magazine - have you read yours?** This edition of Irrigation Australia features metering and energy in irrigation. Catch up on changes to metering standards being implemented in Australia that set the foundations for water metering on a nationally consistent basis. Explore the complexities of determining how efficient irrigation systems are and find out how to save running and water costs with landscape irrigation. See how an Alstonville reseller has given his store a makeover and what the benefits have been. Plus all the regular columns. Sixty four pages of great reading.

Technical features for the autumn 2009 issue are innovation in irrigation, education and professional development, and the advertising feature is recycled water. For information on advertising contact Brian Rault, phone 03 8534 5014, email [brian.rault@halledit.com.au](mailto:brian.rault@halledit.com.au)

## **BOARD NEWS**

**IAL planning forum.** A strategic planning forum will be held in Sydney 5 December. It will be attended by board directors, IDOs and representatives of regions and special interest groups. The forum will be a very important event for IAL as it will set our goals and strategies for the future. It will also provide the basis for the development of an IAL business plan which will help members put plans into action. This is the first planning activity for the new board, and including the regions, special interest groups and IDOs will ensure a very good outcome that reflects members' expectations. If you have an issue that you would like raised then please contact your regional chair.

**CEO to visit regions.** When the draft strategic plan is completed, CEO Chris Bennett will visit the regions to present and discuss it with members. Keep an eye out for dates next year and make sure you get to have your say and meet the new CEO.

**Board meetings 2009.** Dates have been set for 2009 board meetings: 27 February, Melbourne; 22 May, Bunbury, to coincide with Sales Training Course and IDO meeting; 21 August, Brisbane; October (TBC and to coincide with conference at Swan Hill); and 4 December, Sydney – planning for 2010.

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

Peter Toome – chair  
Matthew Durack - vice chair  
Ian Atkinson  
Scott Barber  
Colin Campbell  
Trevor Guest  
Des Horton  
Ian Moorhouse  
Karen Murday  
Tom Vanderbyl

## **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.** Next meeting is 9 December at Urrbrae Horticulture Centre Room R.01. **Please note:** No committee meeting in January. For information about the committee contact Noel Johnston, email. [Noel.johnston@samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](mailto:Noel.johnston@samdbnrm.sa.gov.au)

As a result of a meeting between representatives of the SA committee and SA Water, it has been decided that options to drive and maximise outdoor urban/domestic water use efficiency will be examined. SA Water and the SA IAL will work with relevant industry organisations with a proposed process and timeframe to examine and select a preferred option for longer term alternatives to outdoor water restrictions.

Last month the committee held a special industry briefing evening to inform and update members and guests on the positive progress they have made with the range of various initiatives it and David Chester, IDO, have. Thanks to representatives from H.R. Products, Underhill, Rainbird, Philmac, Antelco, and AquaSpy for providing displays of the latest water conservation products.

**South East Queensland.** The committee is finishing a successful year by hosting their Christmas Dinner 2 December at Fitzzy's on Brisbane's south side where IAL members and their partners will celebrate our achievements. Dr Ted Gardiner, Department of Natural Resources and Water, will be guest speaker. 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)

**Far North Queensland.** For information about the next meeting contact Geoff Chailon, phone 0438 779 196.

**Northwest NSW.** The committee is hosting Senator Barnaby Joyce 11 December at 2.00 pm at the Moree Services Club. All welcome. This will be followed at 3.30 pm by a strategic meeting of the committee to plan our 2009 events. For information on regional activities contact Peter Taylor, email [ptaylor@smk.com.au](mailto:ptaylor@smk.com.au)

**Melbourne and Southern Victoria Region. 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. Western Australia.** Next regional meeting is Tuesday 16 December at 7:30 am 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 November:

Andrew Allen, Victoria  
Holman Industries, WA  
Brendon Jolly, New Zealand  
Mildura Agricultural Contractor, Victoria  
Waterwell Solutions, WA

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Irrigation Efficiency courses 2009.** 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. 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).

Adelaide: 1 & 2 April 2009 and 8 & 9 September 2009  
Brisbane: 1 & 2 April 2009 and 8 & 9 September 2009  
Melbourne: 1 & 2 April 2009 and 8 & 9 September 2009  
Perth: 1 & 2 April 2009 and 8 & 9 September 2009  
Sydney: 1 & 2 April and 8 & 9 September 2009  
Townsville: To be advised in the New Year

**CID exam schedule 2009.** Certified Irrigation Designer exams are held three times throughout Australia in February, June and October. Dates for 2009 are as follows:

**19 February 2009:** closing date for applications, 23 January 2009  
**18 February 2009:** closing date for applications, 22 May 2009  
**15 October 2009:** closing date for applications, 18 September 2009

**Water reuse SIG meeting.** The water reuse special interest group will meet 9 December in Brisbane for an informal dinner. Dr Daryl Stevens will be the guest speaker and he will outline the National Water Recycling Guidelines and the new methods for determining water classes. Anyone interested in water reuse issues are invited. For information contact chairman, Hoffensetz (Netafim Australia), email [ghoffensetz@netafim.com.au](mailto:ghoffensetz@netafim.com.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 [info@irrigation.org.au](mailto:info@irrigation.org.au)

**Groundwater Short Courses 2009.** The Centre for Groundwater Studies offers a variety of short groundwater courses nationally around Australia and also in New Zealand. For 2009 CGS Groundwater Short Courses go to website [www.groundwater.com](http://www.groundwater.com)

**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 website

<http://www.irrigation.org.au/index.cfm?event=public.page&pageuid=81A11158-1731-7D47-82303B0378C514CD>

## STATE ROUNDUP

**Experts advise on water use.** A panel of scientific experts, the Environmental Water Scientific Advisory Committee, has been appointed to advise the Federal Government on the use of water purchased to restore the rivers and wetlands of the Murray-Darling Basin. The committee will provide expert advice on setting environmental watering priorities, monitoring the benefits of environmental flows, and identifying knowledge gaps. Emeritus Professor Barry Hart of Monash University will chair the committee, whose members are: Prof. Angela Arthington, Dr Ben Gawne, Prof. Richard Kingsford, Dr Mike Stewardson, Assoc. Prof. Keith Walker, and Assoc. Prof. Robyn Watts. For information go to website [www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh)

**Sustainable yields report released.** In November Minister Penny Wong released the results of the Sustainable Yields Project, overseen by CSIRO. This is the largest and most detailed study of water availability in the Murray Darling Basin ever undertaken by the CSIRO. For information go to website <http://www.csiro.au/org/MurrayOverviewMDBSY.html>

**Drought affects irrigators' incomes** An ABARE survey of 900 irrigation farms across ten regions in the Murray-Darling Basin has revealed that returns for all irrigators were affected by drought, lower than normal water allocations and higher input costs in 2006-07. From the survey, irrigated horticulture farms realised an average rate of return to capital and management of 1.8% compared with 0.5% for broadacre farms and minus 0.3% for dairy farms. It showed that there is a big variation between irrigation farms in terms of area operated, the degree to which farms rely on irrigation, and the extent of on-farm investment in irrigation infrastructure. Despite receiving lower than normal water allocations in 2006-07, dairy farmers were able to irrigate nearly three-quarters of the area established for irrigation on their farms; horticulture producers irrigated around 70%, while broadacre producers irrigated around 31%. For information go to website [http://www.abareconomics.com/publications\\_html/landwater/landwater\\_08/Irrigation\\_MDB.pdf](http://www.abareconomics.com/publications_html/landwater/landwater_08/Irrigation_MDB.pdf)

**River Murray allocations at 15%.** River Murray irrigation allocations will remain at 15 percent as drought conditions continue across the Murray-Darling Basin. About 200 GL flowed into the River Murray system during October 2008, well below the long-term October average of 1390 GL. The small improvement of 24 GL in the amount of water available to SA has been set aside for critical human needs in 2009-10.

**Soil important for green turf.** A study commissioned by Sydney Water and NSW Dept of Climate Change and conducted by URS has concluded that soil, not the amount of water applied, is the crucial factor in maintaining good quality turf for public open space. For information go to website <http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/how-good-soil-cuts-water-use/2008/11/22/1226770800646.html>

**New warehouse for Philmac.** Philmac has just opened a new distribution centre in Launceston to cater for a growing market in Tasmania. Stock in the centre ranges from micro-irrigation pieces through to five metre lengths of large bore pipe. Having specialist plumbing and civil ranges under the same roof will allow customers to consolidate their product purchases and get everything they need in the one order.

**Costs go up for Adelaide desal plant.** The ABC reported last month that the cost of Adelaide's desalination plant is rising and water bills will have to go up to pay for it. The environmental impact statement for the proposed facility in Adelaide's southern suburbs noted that inflation and fast-tracking have pushed the expected cost from \$1.1 billion to almost \$1.4 billion. For information go to website <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/11/2416598.htm>

**Time running out for assistance info sessions.** Horticulture irrigators in the Riverina have only a few weeks left to access free, confidential, one-on-one information sessions delivering agronomic and financial assistance to growers. The information sessions are part of a workshop program funded by the Australian Government to help irrigators in the Murray-Darling Basin increase water efficiencies and manage their farm businesses during the current irrigation season. Growers are required to register for and complete their sessions by 12 December 2008. For more information phone 02 6964 2420, email [admin@murrumbidgeehort.org.au](mailto:admin@murrumbidgeehort.org.au).

**Industry and urban users to share water in SE Qld.** Daily maximum output from the Wester Corridor Recycled Water project in SE Queensland is estimated to be 232ML. According to the Queensland Water Commission most will go to industrial users, with the rest going to satisfy between 4 and 6% of total urban demand in southeast Queensland. For information go to website <http://www.qwc.qld.gov.au/Commissioning+the+Water+Grid>

**\$34m of water entitlements sold to NSW Government.** Last month it was announced that NSW irrigation agribusiness, Tandou, was selling \$34 million worth of its supplementary or flood water entitlements (250 GL) to the NSW Government. Tandou is located near the ephemeral Lake Tandou south of Menindee and was established in 1972 as a private company growing irrigated cereals and cotton, and grazing Merino sheep. The water will go to achieving NSW's Living Murray objectives. The company has kept its higher reliability entitlements (general and high security regulated water licences) on the Lower Darling, NSW Murray and Murrumbidgee River systems, leading a number of commentators to question the value of a purchase that would only provide savings in a large flood. For information go to website <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/state-pays-34m-for-darling-river-water/2008/11/14/1226318927519.html>

**Desal has important role in long-term water security.** Last month the National Water Commission releases a report, [Emerging trends in desalination](http://www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/893-emerging-trends-in-desalination-a-review-.asp?intSiteID=1), <http://www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/893-emerging-trends-in-desalination-a-review-.asp?intSiteID=1> showing that desalination technologies will play an increasingly important role in securing Australia's water supplies. Australian governments have so far committed over \$7.5 billion in desalination plants to supplement bulk drinking water supplies and further investments are being considered. The report indicates that desalination technology is becoming a more competitive water treatment option.

## PEOPLE

**TEAM Irrigation Pty Ltd wind silver Rhino.** In November TEAM Irrigation was awarded the Inaugural Silver Rhino for Excellence in Rural Achievement presented at the 2008' Rhino Outstanding Business Awards by Dubbo Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Craig Chandler from the company says that the award is a huge accomplishment and reinforces its commitment to and faith in Australia's rural sector.

**New regional sales managers for Philmac.** Philmac has announced that it has appointed Abigail Stokes has been appointed to the position of Regional Sales Manager, SA, and Geoff Tanis to the role of Regional Sales Manager, Victoria. Abigail and Geoff will be responsible for their state sales teams, and will work to further Philmac's existing relationships with its customers. For information go to website [www.philmac.com.au](http://www.philmac.com.au)

## **JOB SPOT**

**Irrigation Surveyor/Designer/Engineer.** Planright is a private consulting firm, providing irrigation and agricultural engineering, water brokerage services, surveying, and civil engineering design to private customers and Government instrumentalities throughout the Goulburn Murray region. It is looking for experienced irrigation surveyors/designers to work on a large range of projects currently underway within the region. Works will involve participation in a broad range of projects carried out by the company's irrigation speciality. If you have: experience in survey, design, drafting of irrigation projects; knowledge of relevant standards; proven ability to liaise with clients and authorities; experience in the use of software design packages such as Autocad, one of these roles could be for you. Closing date for applications is 31 August 2008. For information contacts Peter Leahy or David Barraclough, phone 03 5824 1322, email [results@planright.com.au](mailto:results@planright.com.au)

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**Irrigation Efficiency courses 2009.** 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. 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).

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**Playing the market for natural resource management.** Fancy your skills playing the market? How about applying them to natural resource management? CSIRO economists are inviting people in Canberra, Sydney and southern NSW to join the Australian Knowledge Exchange (AKX), an online prediction market which aims to forecast water availability. The AKX has been set up by CSIRO to test whether trading knowledge online can work for natural resource management. Interested people can register online, get \$100,000 play money and start trading predictions. At the end of each month for three months, the trader who has predicted the dam levels most closely will win a small cash prize. To register and start trading go to website <http://akx.csiro.au/>

**WaterMart Expo.** The future of water in an uncertain climate will be further explored at the second WaterSmart Expo in Narromine 6 and 7 March 2009. Exhibitors and sponsors are being invited to be part of this proactive industry event that will start with a series of field trips across the Central West catchment in February, leading up to the two-day Expo in March with displays, seminars, exhibitor demonstrations, a forum and networking dinner. Exhibitor/sponsor enquiries: Jessica Brown, Central West Catchment Management Authority on 0438 128 966 or [jessica.brown@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jessica.brown@cma.nsw.gov.au).

## **SMART APPROVED WATERMARK**

Season's Greetings from the Smart WaterMark team to readers of *Backwash*. Over 150 products and services have now been approved by the Smart WaterMark independent technical Expert Panel. If you'd like to find out more about the scheme visit our stakeholder web site at [www.smartwatermark.info](http://www.smartwatermark.info) or [emailinfo@smartwatermark.info](mailto:emailinfo@smartwatermark.info) with the header Stakeholder News.

**Next Panel Round.** Information on applying to get the Smart WaterMark label for your water-saving product or service is available from the scheme's industry website or contact the national office, phone 02 9290 3322. The closing date for the next round of applications to the Expert Panel is the 12 March. For more information visit [www.smartwatermark.org](http://www.smartwatermark.org)

## **STANDARDS UPDATE**

Jeremy Cape attended ISO TC23 SC18 thanks to support from the CRC Irrigation Futures, Horticulture Australia and Irrigation Australia. Amongst the range of issues discussed resolutions were passed to continue work in a number of topics including: the need for standards for surface irrigation equipment, including lay flat hose; review test

procedures for clogging of drippers; institute international collaboration on a new method for assessing the performance of filters; review the possibility of Australian meter standards, particularly for measurement in open channels, becoming an international standard; and review European standards for irrigation systems with a view to them becoming international standards.

Member interested in participating in these activities are invited to join the standards group by contacting Jeremy Cape [Jeremy@capeability.biz](mailto:Jeremy@capeability.biz)

## HANDY LINKS

**Irrigator survey.** Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) has just published its survey and analysis of irrigation sectors and regions in the Murray Darling Basin. It makes for pretty interesting reading, especially the section on results of surveys of on-farm irrigation infrastructure, management practices and farmers future intentions in the MDB. The document also provides profiles for each MDB catchment. Go to website to download it

[http://www.abareconomics.com/publications\\_html/landwater/landwater\\_08/Irrigation\\_MDB.pdf](http://www.abareconomics.com/publications_html/landwater/landwater_08/Irrigation_MDB.pdf)

**Waterfind annual report.** The report, released last month, provides information on the state of Australia's water resources, major policy announcements, trading activity for the 2007-08 irrigation season, and analysis on how these factors affected the water market throughout the season. To read the report, go to website

[www.waterfind.com.au/water-report-signup.html](http://www.waterfind.com.au/water-report-signup.html).

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

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