

Email newsletter produced by THE Irrigation Association OF Australia LTD

BACKWASH



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BOARD NEWS

Finances. The IAA Board signed off on the audited financial report for 2006 and the Annual Report at its February meeting. These will be distributed to members shortly.

2007 budget. The budget for 2007 was also approved at the February board meeting. Because there is no national exhibition and conference this year, a deficit has been forecast, however, as usual the combined result for 2006 and 2007 will be a modest increase in members' equity. Reserves held by the association have grown pleasingly over the last 6 years and the board flagged that they will consider off-budget expenditure where significant opportunities to benefit members and help the industry arise.

Board nominations called. Nominations are being called for positions on the IAA Board and close 26 March. Would you like to contribute to the strategic development of the IAA and the irrigation industry? If so, this is your opportunity. Those considering nomination are encouraged to discuss their nomination with the relevant regional committee.

IAA/ANCID consultative meetings. Consultative meetings with members from ANCID and IAA have now been held in North Queensland, southeast Queensland, WA, SA, and Victoria to discuss the possible merger of the two organisations. The response has been very positive. Questions have centered around the balance between rural and urban irrigation and how particular sectors of the irrigation industry will be represented and have issues of relevance to them progressed. Adequately resourced subcommittees and special interest groups should help with this.

The next consultative meeting is 22 March in Sydney at a venue near the airport. Anyone interested should contact then IAA office for further details.

CID review. The board also discussed a proposal by Alison Carmichael to review the Certified Irrigation Designer process and to bring it into line with the rest of the Certification program. This would entail aligning the CID exam content to an existing or yet-to-be-developed training program, possibly at tertiary level. It will be important to get this right as the Queensland Government recently indicated it is looking at requiring all government irrigation tenders to have designs done by IAA CIDs. The Certification Board will be working with Alison to further develop this initiative.

ATO ruling on managed investment schemes. The IAA board recently wrote to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister seeking a more reasonable phase-in period for the ATO ruling on non-forestry managed investment schemes. While such schemes have had a range of impacts on the rural sector, they have definitely led to investment in latest technology irrigation systems and those that have geared up to this market need time to realign their businesses.

National Plan for Water Security. The CEO attended the first industry information session on the Prime Minister's National Plan for Water Security under which \$5.88 billion will be made available for modernising irrigation systems over the next 10 years. While Victoria remains uncommitted, the future of the plan is in some doubt. However, there are significant opportunities for the industry and the IAA is working hard to ensure practical benefits flow to the industry and that the IAA is closely in its eventual implementation.

New IDO for Sydney Region. Welcome on board to Mark Matthews, who has started work as the new IDO Sydney Region. Mark replaces Tim Gilbert, who has taken up a job with the NWC. With his experience in the industry, both as a business owner and working for government agencies, Mark brings a unique perspective to the job. Mark's contact details are phone 02 9476 0142, email mark.matthews@irrigation.org.au

Contact YOUR board directors. Directors of the IAA national board have been assigned portfolios. If you have a question or suggestion on one of the specific areas go to:

Trevor Guest □ to facilitate the establishment and adoption of best practice and certification in all sectors of the irrigation industry

Peter Toome □ to provide value for money and tangible benefits to existing and new members

Steve Peck □ to develop and maintain effective internal networks and communication

Matthew Durack □ to encourage and assist relevant, practical and strategic research to be funded and undertaken

Tony Addis □ to be the preferred source of industry information and advocacy

Ken Caldecott □ to provide leadership in industry training

Helen Fairweather □ to provide quality input to policy development on issues important to membership and the industry

Des Horton □ to ensure the association is efficiently governed, administered and resourced

Irrigation Australia out this month. The autumn edition of Irrigation Australia magazine, out this month, features climate change, training and filtration.

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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

News on activities from regional committees around Australia. You can keep up with IAA 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 are given below. Contact your region to see how you can get involved or contact the IAA head office to find your local IAA 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. Next meeting is 13 March at Urrbrae Horticulture Centre, room R.01 (Irrigation training room) at 3.30pm.

Northwest NSW. Next meeting is 8 March for a normal meeting and possibly 22 March for the AGM. A National Board director is being invited to the AGM to explain the ANCID/IAA relationship. The drought has taken centre stage for many members in the area, which has basically run out of surface water allocation for this irrigation year. Many irrigators have fallen short of water for summer crop irrigations and, to compound the issue, groundwater cutbacks are

being imposed on many groundwater irrigators as part of water sharing plans. The general consensus for the Federal Government Water Plan is a 50-50 bet each way as to whether they improve the system or simply add another management level. Some believe it may clarify long-term security issues but hopefully not reduce river caps to achieve this.

Water use efficiency is a key theme for the 2007 regional committee, which is working to fund an IDO position. For information contact Peter Taylor, email ptaylor@smk.com.au

South East Queensland. Next meeting is 13 March at Landcentre, Woolloongabba at 5.15 pm. This meeting will be preceded by an open meeting to plan future workshops and training activities for the region. Come and have your say. For information contact the secretariat, phone 0413 334 679.

Darling Downs. Next meeting will be the AGM. Details to be advised. For information contact David Wigginton, phone 0748311711, mobile 0427 789 498, email: wiggind@usq.edu.au.

Far North Queensland. Next meeting is a dinner meeting Wednesday 14 March 6:30 pm at Australian Hotel, 11 Palmer St, Townsville (Glass Function Room). Agenda to be advised. For information about activities and the committee, contact Barbara Moloney, regional support officer, phone 07 4721 5811, 07 4721 5816.

Western Australia. Next Executive meeting is 7:30 am Tuesday 13 March at the Metro Inn, South Perth. For more information on WA activities contact Doug Hall, the WA Region's Industry Development Officer (ph: 08 9474 9089; mobile 0407 701 513; or email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au).

Sydney. Next meeting will 22 March be to discuss IAA's ANCID merger. For information contact the IAA head office, phone 02 9476 0142.

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MEMBERSHIP

With Australia in the grip of the worst drought on record, irrigators in many areas facing zero allocations and all capital cities except Darwin on water restrictions, these are challenging times for the irrigation industry. At times like these a strong industry association is vital to ensure that policies and programs that provide a sustainable future for your business is supported.

Do you know someone in the industry in Australia who isn't a member? Why not approach them and give them an application form. Regional committees are encouraged to contact new members and make sure they are invited to the next regional event. New members can find the contact details of all regional committees on the IAA website www.irrigation.org.au. Do your bit to encourage membership from businesses you deal with.

Welcome to new members for February:

- Danny Bast, Sprinkler Fix, Mt Evelyn Victoria
- Scott Errington, Southern Cross, Darwin NT
- David Ferris, W A Reticulation Supplies, Armadale WA
- Peter Kemp, Hornsby Shire Council, Hornsby NSW
- William Link, U Plan Pty Ltd, Cannonvale Queensland
- Colin Peak, Peak Environmental Monitoring, Lennox Head NSW
- Tara Ruane, Eaton WA
- Barry Trotter, Ingham Irrigation, Ingham Queensland

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2007 course dates Certified Irrigation Auditor □ Landscape. Dates for 2007 Certified Irrigation Auditor □ Landscape courses are:

Adelaide. 17 & 18 April and 9 & 10 October

Brisbane. 15 & 16 May, and 22 & 23 August

Sydney. 21 & 22 May, and 19 & 20 September

Perth. 13 & 14 March and 22 & 23 August

Melbourne. 18 & 19 April and 5 & 6 September

Extra courses run on demand. For information and to register contact Catherine Parbery, IAA head office, phone 02 9476 0142, email catherine.parbery@irrigation.org.au

2007 Retail Training Course. The 2007 Irrigation Industry Retail Training Course will be held from 21 July 2007 in Caloundra on the Queensland Sunshine Coast. For information go to website www.irrigation.org.au and download the brochure.

CID □ renewals due by 26 March. CIDs will be receiving their renewal notices in the mail this month. Renewals are due with IAA Head Office by 26 March. As an added incentive, if you have your completed renewal in by this date you won't have to pay any outstanding fees that may have accrued. All you will have to pay is your \$110 renewal for the next 12 months. This is a great opportunity to renew your CID without having to pay any fees owed. Look out for your renewal form, which will be sent to you this month. Return it, with any changes, to the IAA along with your payment of \$110 by 26 March. As well, because some of our CIDs were not mentioned in the summer edition of Irrigation Australia we will be including an updated directory of CIDs and CIA-Ls in the winter edition of Irrigation Australia. Don't miss out □ get your details in by 26 March. For information contact Catherine Parbery, phone 02 9476 0142, email catherine.parbery@irrigation.org.au, go to website www.irrigation.org.au

New □ Certified Irrigation Agronomist. Just developed by the IAA; certification for irrigation agronomists provides a way of recognising and endorsing practising agronomists for their particular skills in irrigation, over and above their established agronomic skills. Most applicants will have a qualification in another discipline such as agriculture, horticulture or agronomy and/or substantial industry experience. They may be working as consultants or as specialist employees for government departments or large corporate enterprises. To be considered you will be required to show proof of completion of 6 out of 9

competencies from four categories: system capacity; scheduling; soils and the environment; and consulting. The degree of choice is greater than with other certifications, reflecting the variety of tasks undertaken at this level. The IAA is currently working on programs to help people to obtain the necessary skills and proof. Every two years certified irrigation agronomists will need to renew their certification by providing evidence that they are keeping their irrigation skills up-to-date. Interested? Contact Alison Carmichael on 0414 287 079 or alison.carmichael@irrigation.org.au for an information pack.

School of Irrigation. Don't miss the School of Irrigation 21 - 22 May in Sydney. Prepare for your CID exam, complete a Certified Irrigation Auditor - Landscape, train to be an irrigation assessor or enrol in a 3-day program to help irrigation managers to achieve certification. For information go to the IAA website www.irrigation.org.au

Queensland Primary Producers Training Needs Survey. Are you a Queensland Primary Producer? Or do you work with Primary Producers? Have you identified a need for training in your particular primary industry? If so, log onto the Skills Telegraph <http://skillstelegraph.dpi.qld.gov.au/> and key in your training needs! The information collected will be collated, validated and prioritised and then provided to the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts in a Skills Plan. They will use the information to ensure that training that they fund is targeted directly to meet industry's needs.

Promote your membership. Members of the association are entitled to use the IAA logo for promotional purposes. The logo is available on request by contacting Catherine Parbery, phone 02 9476 0142, email Catherine.parbery@irrigation.org.au

Apply for certification now before fees introduced. Considering becoming certified? Did you know that the \$200 application fee for the new certification program won't be introduced until 30 June 2007? Now might be the best time to take the plunge. (Please note that this offer does not apply to certification of designers or irrigation auditors.) Contact Alison Carmichael 0414 287 079 or alison.carmichael@irrigation.org.au to find out more.

First CGS groundwater course for 2007. A fundamental overview of groundwater and surfacewater processes. Tuesday 13 March - Thursday 15 March, DPI&F Conference Centre, Brisbane. To register and for more information go to http://groundwater.com.au/images/stories/courses_and_conferences/courses/flyer-a4-15th&16th-gtkg-sw-07.pdf

Need a JP? If you live in Sydney and need the services of a Justice of Peace, Jann O'Connor from IAA head office is a registered JP. Members should ring before coming to the office to make sure she is available, phone 02 9476 0142.

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. Get your copy now from the IAA: \$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 IAA members to distribute to the general public and domestic customers and a print ready version can be downloaded from the IAA website at

<http://www.irrigation.org.au/download/standards/Home%20Gardener%20FINAL%20web.pdf>

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AROUND INDUSTRY

Victoria not in water deal. At a meeting in Canberra last Friday, NSW, Queensland, SA and ACT agreed to hand control of the Murray Darling system to the Federal Government. Victoria is still negotiating a deal. Concessions made by the Federal Government to the states included; agreeing to establish an independent body to advise on critical issues relating to water flows (although the Federal Minister for the Environment will not be bound by this advice), a guaranteed review of the national plan after seven years, and the Commonwealth assuming all liabilities if a country town runs out of water.

NFF wants assurances on water plan. The National Farmers Federation says that although it welcomes the "intent" of the Federal Government's water plans, it wants questions answered and details provided before it gives wholehearted support. Some of the things they question include: what happens to property rights assigned under the current arrangements and guaranteed to 2014?; how is over allocation of our water resource going to be defined and assessed?; where have the estimates of water savings through "efficiency gains" of around 2,500 GL come from?; how will "non-viable" and "inefficient irrigators" be assessed?; what will happen to current water sharing plans ; and how will the proposed integrated water allocation system work?

Tax on NSW groundwater compensation. Disappointment for groundwater irrigators in NSW who received compensation when their entitlements were cut as the Prime Minister conceded in Parliament in February that they will be taxed on the payments after all. Mr Howard said that the Intergovernmental Agreement signed by the Commonwealth and NSW Government was structured so that the payments would not be seen as compensation for "any perceived loss to farmers". This means that the funds received by irrigators will be taxed as income.

Federal Labor's water vision. The ALP's shadow minister for Water and infrastructure, Anthony Albanese, said at the Australian Water Summit last week that the Opposition's vision for water included using money from the \$2 billion Australian Government Water Fund to help states with big-ticket projects, shifting water use from low efficiency to high efficiency crops, putting higher prices on water and allocating more funding into water infrastructure of cities. He also criticised the Federal Government for spending less than half of the \$2 billion allocated for projects in the Australian Water Fund.

Water a prime investment. One of the arguments brought up in the past about water trading was that the top end of town would buy rights and crowd out private irrigators. An item in the Daily Telegraph 26 February

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,,21281376-5006009,00.html>

identifies that managed investment companies like Macquarie Agribusiness and Timbercorp are investing substantially in water allocations to support their agricultural activities and driving up water prices in the process. CEO of Western Murray Irrigation, Cheryl Rix, is quoted as saying that over 20% of water rights in that area are now owned by private investment funds. According to CEO of Murray Irrigation, George Warne, investment schemes and funds are a major contributor to steeply increasing water prices in the last few years because they grow high value crops and can afford to pay more. An example of the market working as it should?

NWC releases national water charging stocktake. The NWC released the first national stocktake of water charging policies in urban and rural water sectors this week. The stocktake is the first step in developing consistent approaches to the way water charges are set across Australia, a key aim of the National Water Initiative. Not surprisingly, the stocktake highlighted differences in water charging across states and territories. Three areas were identified for further action: approaches to recovery of capital expenditure in urban and rural water sectors; approaches to charging customers for urban water services; and approaches to identifying and recovering the costs of water planning and management. For information go to website

www.nwc.gov.au/nwi/consistency_in_water_charging.cfm

Water top election issue in NSW. It's not police numbers, hospitals or getting the trains to run on time that has become number one issue in the NSW election. Rather, water has claimed this spot. At his campaign launch in February Premier Morris Iemma announced a \$130m recycling initiative across Sydney using disused gas mains and linking major users (go to www.morrisiemma.com.au). Opposition leader Peter Debnam has been photographed drinking recycled water as part of his pitch to stir voter enthusiasm for his promise on indirect potable reuse (go to www.nsw.liberal.org.au). The Nationals are promising recycling in country areas, better funding for regional utilities and investigations of dam improvements.

Beattie dusts off Bradfield scheme. Reaction to Queensland Premier Peter Beattie's suggestion to pipe water from north Queensland and northern NSW into the Murray has been mixed. A Federal task force will look at the idea but Water and Environment Minister, Malcolm Turnbull says that it has been examined in the past and found to be neither economically and environmentally feasible. The Wentworth Group and former CEO of MDBC, Don Blackmore, were also cool on the idea, as were environmental groups.

Outlook for water in SA. In January rainfall was less than average in the primary catchment area in the east in SA so that inflows into the River Murray System were very low at about 30 GL. This is the 8th consecutive month that inflow to the River Murray system has been at a record low. With volumes in MDBC storages (Dartmouth, Hume, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes) at around 16% of total capacity, and if the drought continues, SA may receive as little as 337 GL in the 2007-08 financial year, just one-sixth of the amount it needs. Water saving measures being worked on by the SA and Federal governments and Murray-Darling Committee include: pumping extra water from the Murray into Adelaide Hills' reservoirs to reduce potential of water quality problems in the river; plans for a temporary weir; modifying 4 pumps that supply Adelaide and other areas so they can pump from a much lower river; not supplying water to some wetlands; and considering plans for desalination and

extra recycling. For information contact Amy Goodman or Caren Martin, SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board, phone 08 8582 4477.

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FOR THE DIARY

CIAL courses. Dates for CIAL courses in 2007 are:

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JOB SPOT

Looking for a career in the water industry - why not join McCracken's. McCracken's Water Services, an Australian company, has 18 stores between Cairns and Melbourne. It is involved in the water business selling and installing all forms of irrigation, from large pivots to systems watering fine sports ovals and home gardens; pumping stations; stock watering systems; pipelines; water treatment plants; and storage facilities. Because of its diversification and to support the company's constant growth it needs keen and enthusiastic employees who are already trained or are prepared to be trained. Outstanding opportunities exist for external and internal sales personnel, pump repair and installation technicians, division and branch managers in many areas throughout Queensland. Interested? Email your CV in the strictest confidence to chrisorr@mccrackens.com.au or phone Chris Orr, 0400 754 896.

Project Consultant. Are you ready to take your career to the next level? If you enjoy the challenges of design and project management, are organised and have an eye for detail, chances are you will really enjoy working with Australia's largest independent irrigation design consultancy. For over 21 years HydroPlan has specialised in delivery of irrigation and water management solutions and

services. It has offices in Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Beijing. See more at www.hydroplan.com.au When you join HydroPlan you will not only get to work on exciting projects, you will learn by working with internal and external experts in a personally rewarding environment. While your experience, your tertiary qualifications and/or your CID status will be an indication of your suitability, your main assets will be your positive attitude, your ability to get results and your thirst for excellence. You will play a valuable role in a small team helping with technical investigations, supervising installations, designs, reports and specifications, and liaising with clients, contractors and authorities. We are offering flexible employment terms and attractive salary packages to suit the right people in any of our offices. Inquiries for further information and/or curriculum vitae submitted to the Managing Director, John Gransbury (jg@hydroplan.com.au) will be welcomed and held strictly in confidence.

French student requires work experience. The IAA has had a request from a 21-year-old French student who is looking for work experience in water management from approximately June to the end of the year. Amelie Valette is a second year Agronomy student at the Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon, which requires that students complete 6 months work experience as part of the course. She will be on a grant so would require accommodation and board but not a wage. Her English is good, she has computer skills in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Visual Basic, and she is keen to experience Australian culture. A great opportunity to provide work experience and learn about another culture. If you think you can provide Amelie with the experience she is looking for, contact Catherine Parbery at IAA head office, phone 02 9476 0142, email catherine.parbery@irrigation.org.au

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WATERAID UPDATE

Recycling Unwanted Mobile Phones. Unwanted mobile phones can be left for recycling at the IAA office. For each one collected a donation is made to Water Aid Australia which is an international charity dedicated to helping some of the world's poorest people escape the stranglehold of poverty and disease caused by living without safe water and sanitation. If you are interested in collecting in your own area please email watercharity@yvw.com.au or contact Rosie Wheen on 03 9872 1730 for information or to receive a collection box and starter kit.

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INSURANCE UPDATE

Confused by Liability Insurance? The types of liability insurance you need to consider are:

Public Liability. Protects you and your business against the financial risk of being found liable to a third party for death or injury, loss or damage of property or pure economic loss resulting from your negligence.

Professional Indemnity. Protects you from legal action taken for losses incurred as a result of your advice. It provides indemnity cover if your client suffers a loss - either material, financial or physical - directly attributed to negligent acts.

Product Liability. If you sell, supply or deliver goods, even in the form of repair or service, you may need cover against claims of goods causing injury or damage. Product liability insurance covers damage or injury caused to another business or person by the failure of your product or the product you are selling.

For information about insurance for your situation contact the IAA's insurer, Insurance House, Bev Spark, phone 03 5483 1066, email bev@insurancehouse.com.au website www.insurancehouse.com.au

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HANDY LINKS

Find out the latest in what's happening with Smart Watermark at its new site www.smartwatermark.info

The Bureau of Meteorology has released the 2006 Annual Climate Statement for Australia, available at <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/> Some facts and figures:

- 2006 was the eleventh warmest year since comparable records became available in 1910
- It was Australia's warmest spring season on record
- The highest rainfall total recorded in Queensland and Australia was Bellenden Ker Top station with 9850 mm (average of 7751 mm).

For information on Water Use Efficiency in dairy forages, go to <http://www.dairyinfo.biz/Manual/index.cfm?ManualID=16> Follow the links to: industry projects/m5 farming systems/M5 info series (new)/stream learning's/water use efficiency.

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BOOKSHOP

A wide range of irrigation related books and other publications are available for the IAA On-Line Bookshop. Just visit <http://www.irrigation.org.au/> .

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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