



BACKWASH

Email Newsletter produced by Irrigation Australia Limited

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If you are an ANCID member receiving Backwash for the first time, WELCOME! Backwash is a monthly e-newsletter aimed at keeping members up to date with a variety of issues and initiatives in the Australian irrigation industry. If you have items, news or questions you would like included, contact your new association Irrigation Australia. If staff within your organisation would benefit from receiving Backwash simply send us their name, company, phone number and email and we will add them to the list.

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New peak body for irrigation industry

A new peak body for the irrigation industry in Australia has been formed, called Irrigation Australia Limited (IAL). The new organisation has resulted from the merger of the two major irrigation bodies; the Australia National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (ANCID), representing irrigation water authorities, delivery companies, consultancy firms, technology companies, government agencies and individuals; and the Irrigation Association of Australia (IAA), representing both rural and urban irrigation sectors from manufacturers and distributors to end users. Support was overwhelming from members of both organisations for the merger.

□The new organisation will allow us to provide much stronger representation on irrigation issues at all levels and much better services for our members,□ said the chair of IAL, Stephen Mills.

Formerly chair of ANCID, Stephen leads an interim 10-person board formed from both organisations with Peter Toome from IAA taking the deputy chair post.

□The new body will continue with all the services and activities that IAA and ANCID undertook but will also look for new opportunities to promote the industry and its members,□ said Peter.

Irrigation Australia brings together a significant force in the irrigation industry in Australia:

- ANCID members manage about \$6.6 billion of assets (at replacement value), in 68 businesses with 35,000 irrigators and 198 towns as customers. This represents about 45% of all irrigation water entitlements in Australia. ANCID has been active in benchmarking, industry research & development and information dissemination.
- IAA has more than 800 members in both the rural and urban irrigation sectors. The IAA manages irrigation information, training and certification programs, a network of development officers and the largest irrigation exhibition in the southern hemisphere.

The CEO of IAL is Jolyon Burnett from IAA. Kim Russell, the former executive officer of ANCID, remains in the team as Special Project Officer. IAL is headquartered at the IAA offices in Hornsby, Sydney. It has a staff of 10 and will maintain a presence in all mainland states.

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BOARD NEWS

Interim board meets. The interim board of Irrigation Australia met in Bundaberg at the ANCID conference. The meeting was attended by all available ANCID Executive and IAA Board members. At the meeting an interim Board of ten, including 5 former ANCID executive members and 5 former IAA directors, was elected. The interim board is: Stephen Mills (Chairman), Peter Toome (Deputy Chairman), Matthew Durack, Stuart Ellis, Karen Murday, Elaine Gardiner, Trevor Guest, Peter Boettcher, Colin Campbell and Russell Cooper.

Rod Carr from the Department of Environment and Water will take up an ex-officio position and Des Horton continues in the role of Treasurer.

New constitution is first task. The first task of the interim board will be to develop a new constitution including membership categories, board structure and election processes. The proposed new arrangements will be presented to members in a series of consultative meetings later in 2007 or early 2008. From this a new strategic plan and business plan will be developed to guide the organisation in allocating resources and priorities for action.

Irrigation Australia 2008 Conference and Exhibition bigger and better. The 2008 irrigation Exhibition and Conference in Melbourne from 20 to 22 May will be the first major event for IAL and the aim is to make it the biggest and best showcase for the industry yet.

Membership participation. The board is currently reviewing the operation of IAL to see how membership participation can be encouraged and supported. One idea is to establish special interest groups where members with a common interest in issues such as design, metering and monitoring and groundwater might be brought together and supported to share ideas, experiences and drive IAL activity in that areas. Your thoughts and suggestions are welcome.

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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

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 are given 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. Next meeting is 3.30pm, 11 September at Urrbrae Horticultural Centre, room R.01 (Irrigation training room).

A reminder to add to your diaries the Riverland field days 19 & 20 September, at Barmera. A feature is the Improving Irrigation Efficiency project, Irrigation Efficiency Avenue, which consists of irrigation related businesses dedicated to irrigation technology and efficiency.

The region is also proposing to hold an evening 9 October at Urrbrae to meet the Horticultural Industries Media, with the object of informing them about: the industry's stance on water restrictions, products available to help save water, and our industry and association generally. Manufacturers and distributors will be participating to help get the message across. If you are interested in being involved or would like more information contact Don Marriott, phone 8336 5799, fax 8365 0188, email dmarriot@tpgi.com.au

South East Queensland. Next meeting is Tuesday 11 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 secy.seq@irrigation.org.au.

Darling Downs. Next meeting will be in October; date to be advised. For information contact David Wigginton, phone 07 4831 1711, 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

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

Western Australia. Next executive meeting is 7:30 am Tuesday 18 September 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).

The Waterwise Garden Irrigator Program (WGIP) 2007 continues to be rolled out. There are now over 50 registered WGIP Installers representing over 25 businesses. Only clients of WGIP 2007 members can access a new WA Government Waterwise Rebate for domestic irrigation systems. To be eligible for the rebate, the irrigation systems must meet system specifications developed by the WA Region of Irrigation Australia.

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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. We hope that you will continue to show IAL the support you have shown to IAA and/or ANCID in the past.

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. New members should use the old IAA membership application form until a new IAL form is finalised. It can be found at www.irrigation.org.au.

Welcome to new members for August:

- James Davies, Clematis VIC
- Alan Golding, Aquacad, Quinns Rocks WA
- Alvin Gopal, Horticultural Skills Australia, Melbourne VIC
- Bruce Keys, Watereasy Australia, Greensborough VIC
- Terry Mannion, Twist Engineering Pty Ltd, Scarborough WA
- Melynds McCann, Creative with Nature, Edgewater WA
- Stuart McConville, Pooh Solutions, Barkers Vale NSW
- Alister Murrell, Westforce Landscaping, Padbury WA
- Colette Newcome, Waratah North VIC
- Brad Pearce, Town of Kwinana, Medina WA
- Russell Price, Peel Reticulation & Landscaping, Mandurah WA
- Jason Rothery, The Retic Shop, Southern River WA
- Ludovic Schmidt, Dept of Primary Industries & Water, Hobart TAS
- Stephen Smolenaars, Burnley VIC
- Lou Vieira, City of Cockburn, Bibra Lake WA

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2007 course dates Certified Irrigation Auditor Landscape. The Certified Auditor program is aimed at anyone responsible for or operating a commercial or public irrigation system. The program provides training in basic irrigation system operation and scheduling and the process for determining the uniformity and efficiency of the system. With increasing scrutiny of system operation and often regulatory requirements to meet water saving targets, this course is a must for sporting bodies, local councils and irrigation contractors. Dates for 2007 Certified Irrigation Auditor Landscape courses are:

Townsville. 12 & 13 September 2007

Sydney. 19 & 20 September

Note. The Melbourne course (5 & 6 September) and Adelaide course (9 & 10 October) are full. No more registrations being taken.

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

CID exams 2007. Applications for CID exams to be held on 17 October 2007 in each capital city Australia wide are being taken. Closing date is Friday, 21 September 2007. For information and to apply contact IAL head office, phone 02 9476 0142, email certification@irrigation.org.au

CID exam tune up. If you are doing a CID exam and want to get on the front foot, a 2-day preparation course is being held in Adelaide in mid September. Anyone interested contact Jann O'Connor, phone 02 9476 0142, email jann.oconnor@irrigation.org.au

WGIP 2007 training sessions. The Waterwise Garden Irrigator Program (WGIP) 2007 continues to be rolled out. There are now over 50 registered WGIP Installers representing over 25 businesses (see http://www.watercorporation.com.au/W/waterwise_garden_irrigators.cfm).

Only clients of WGIP 2007 members can access a new WA Government Waterwise Rebate for domestic irrigation systems. To be eligible for the rebate, the irrigation systems must meet system specifications developed by the WA Region of Irrigation Australia. Future training sessions will be held:

Perth Wednesday 12 September, 5.30pm □ 8.30pm

Geraldton Friday 21 September, 9.00am □ 12.00pm

Perth Wednesday 10 October, 5.30pm □ 8.30pm

To attend a training sessions, or find out more about WGIP 2007, contact Doug Hall, phone 08 9474 9089, email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au

Bush workers to benefit. The Prime Minister announced on 31 August that agricultural and horticultural apprentices will now receive a tool kit worth up to \$800 to help them get started in their new career. In addition, they will be eligible for the \$1,000 Apprenticeship Training (Fee) Voucher, which reimburses apprentices or their employers the cost of their course fees up to \$500 per year for the first two years of training. This assistance is in addition to the traineeship incentives and for the first time irrigation is specifically mentioned. For more information, contact the Australian Apprenticeships referral line on 13 38 73.

National industry recognition; something for everyone. In 2006 your association expanded its certification program for irrigation practitioners who are dedicated to best practice and supporting sustainable water use. Certification is now offered to irrigation managers, operators, contractors, installers, retailers and agronomists. Apply now and take advantage of the 50% reduction in the \$200 application fee. For information go to http://www.irrigation.org.au/ci_moci.html

Your feedback □ draft certification renewal guidelines. People who enter IAL's new certification program will need to renew their certification every two years. As with racehorses, we have made this renewal date the same each year □ 1 October. At this time all holders of certification will have to show that they are still active in the industry and have taken steps to keep their skills and knowledge up to date by accruing 20 points of activity, regardless of how many certifications an individual holds. Different weightings will be given to different activities. For example, attending formal training events with assessment will rate higher than simply attending a short course. Alison Carmichael has drafted a set of guidelines for renewal. If you would to read and comment on the draft renewal process please email Alison and she will send you a copy, email Alison.carmichael@irrigation.org.au

Irrigation Retail Training Course. The 2007 course concluded 2 August. There was great feedback from the participants and several enquiries already about booking people in for next year. The information on next year's course will be available by the end of October. Thanks to supporters: Advanced Industrial Products, Davey Water Products, Grundfos, HR Products, Hunter Industries, Iplex, Netafim, Philmac, Toro and Vinindex.

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

Water and Environmental Research scholarships. Research projects are being offered at Honours, Masters and PhD levels by four Centre for Groundwater Studies partners, Flinders University, University of Western Australia, University of New South Wales and Curtin University of Technology. The projects are in areas including hydrogeology, geophysics, soils, water chemistry, plant ecology, microbiology, and catchment hydrology. CGS Postgraduate Top-Up Scholarships, valued at \$5,000 a year, are being offered as a supplement to the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA, valued at \$19,616 for full-time students. If you have a background in science, maths or engineering and would like to be part of a leading research team working on land, water and environmental issues you are encouraged to submit an expression of interest and your CV by Friday 21st September 2007 to Karen Schilling, phone 08 8201 5633, email Karen@groundwater.com.au

ICE WaRM launches post grad program. The International Centre of Excellence in Water Resources Management (ICE WaRM) has launched a Masters program in Water Resources Management. The program is the first of its kind in Australia and covers developments in water quality and treatment, irrigation, water infrastructure, catchment management, aquatic ecosystem management, groundwater hydrology, hydrogeology and public health. Fifty seven students from Australia and overseas have enrolled in the program. For information go to <http://www.icewarm.com.au/>

Metering water; your thoughts. We've received a request from Jason, a researcher in the United States who is looking for information on metering pressurised water used for irrigation in domestic situations. If you think you can help out here's the question and his email address:

Here in the western U.S. many residents have water piped to their house for pressurised irrigation (separate from drinking water). This water is unmetered because the water is not purified and the lines are small (3/4" to 1" in diameter). I am doing research into looking at the possibilities of metering for this application. Are you aware of any similar applications like this in your neck of the woods? Is there a need to meter irrigation water in small lines in Australia?
Email jason.lillywhite@ch2m.com

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AROUND INDUSTRY

Water bill passes the Senate. An historic moment in Canberra 17 August, when the Water Bill 2007 was passed, unamended, by the Senate. The legislation will implement the \$10 billion National Plan for Water Security. According to Minister Turnbull, the bill represents the most significant and important reform of water management in Australia's history. As part of the bill the planning and management of water in the basin will be brought under an independent expert based body - the Murray-Darling Basin Authority whose core function will be to establish scientifically based sustainable diversion limits. Another key aspect of the legislation is the enhanced role for the Bureau of Meteorology in measuring and monitoring water resources. The Government will pursue further reforms of water management in the Basin, including a referral of powers, through the Intergovernmental Agreement, which has been released to the states for consultation.

ALP supports plan. While the Federal Opposition has backed the water plan, it has criticised its lack of detail and labelled the National Party water reform "blockers". The Opposition said that the plan provided greater Commonwealth leadership, and should contribute to improving river health and sort out over allocation of water in the system.

More than a bill in the mail. The WA Government has launched an initiative to help householders reduce their water use and save money. Water Corporation accounts will now include a water use comparison graph so householders can compare their current water use to previous years and to the average water use in their own suburb. This is in addition to other initiatives, including; extending the Waterwise rebate program with \$18 million over the next two years; introducing statewide restrictions on the use of bore watering systems; and setting a target of reducing residential water use from the current average of 106 kilolitres per person per year to less than 100 kilolitres per person per year. For information go to http://www.watercorporation.com.au/m/media_detail.cfm?id=3368

Inquiry to look at Murray-Darling water use. The SA Parliament is holding an inquiry into Murray-Darling agricultural water use in both SA and eastern states. The inquiry, which was proposed in the Upper House by the Democrats, will examine agricultural needs from the river system and the possibility of stopping water-intensive farming. The SA Government doesn't support the inquiry, arguing that water use was already being controlled by a government-mandated licensing system.

MDBC water purchase pilot razing success. A Murray-Darling Basin Commission call to irrigators, water brokers and others in the southern basin to sell water entitlements closed only four weeks into an eleven-week pilot project. The MDBC had received more than enough expressions of interest to meet the project's aim of buying up to 20 GL (or about 0.2% of the average water diversion from the southern basin) at market prices. Any recovered water will be

used eventually for The Living Murray Environmental Watering Plan to improve ecological conditions at the so-called icon sites. For information go to www.mdbc.gov.au

SA allocations low. In SA irrigation allocations will continue to remain at 13% for the entire year. Murray-Darling Basin storages remain at only at 20% capacity, compared to the long-term average of 66% capacity for this time of the year. The total River Murray system inflows (excluding Snowy releases) are expected to be about 330 GL, which is significantly below the long-term average for this time of the year of about 1 500 GL.

Scarcer, more costly water. A report just released by the Water Services Association of Australia says that our cities must find new sources of water and that costly infrastructure is needed, with the price to be paid by consumers in the form of much higher water charges. According to the report, our capital cities (except Hobart) will need to have in places a variety of water supply sources, such as from desalination, recycling, pipe networks to connect different water supply systems, dams, water trading and groundwater within the next decade. Not only will they need to pay attention to physical infrastructure but also human resources with a big skills shortage being predicted. For information go to www.wsaa.asn.au

Water use research to benefit nursery industry. Water use research projects by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Queensland are expected to help the nursery industry improve its water use efficiency. Among the projects being undertaken is the development of an economic modelling program to illustrate the potential advantages of investing in new irrigation technologies. The program will enable Industry Development Officers to assist production nurseries seeking to maximise their water use efficiency more cost effectively. Other relevant findings highlight potential performance shortfalls in water treatment technologies, which may lead to a review of recommendations for pathogen control. For information contact Robert Prince, NGIA, phone 02 9876 5200, email robert.prince@ngia.com.au.

Horticulture in talks about allocations in MDBC. A delegation from Horticulture Australia Council (HAC), the peak national association representing the horticultural industries, met in August with the Federal Government and officials from Centrelink as part of ongoing discussions over low water allocations in the southern Murray Darling Basin (MDB). From 1 July this year, allocations for irrigators in the area have been severely cut to either zero or minimal amounts. Without irrigation and/or rain in spring and summer the affected regions (MIA, Goulburn Valley, Sunraysia and Riverland) face a crisis. Less than 48% of normal annual allocation for permanent plantings from November to March next year would see, at best, severe disruption to the plants' productivity for several years; and at worst, massive and unprecedented death of plantings along the MDB.

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JOB SPOT

Part time Clerical Administration Assistant. The WA region of Irrigation Australia (IAL) is expanding its operations and is seeking an enthusiastic, self-motivated individual to join us. We require a part time clerical administration assistant to support the Industry Development Officer in his activities. To be successful in this role you will have effective communication and interpersonal skills with experience in office management and good customer service skills. Experience with Microsoft Suite including Word, Excel, Outlook essential, and the ability to work alone as well as in a small team. Duties include: managing databases; general clerical duties, such as filing and membership renewals; preparing and distributing a monthly newsletter; communicating with member; and receptionist duties. The position is 20 hours per week, over 4/5 days for the first 12 months, casual work classification.

Contact Tim Hodgkins, phone 08 9309 3588 to register your interest. It is anticipated that an appointment will be made for an October 1 2007 start.

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FOR THE DIARY

Certified Irrigation Auditor Landscape courses. Dates for courses in 2007 are:

Townsville. 12 & 13 September 2007

Sydney. 19 & 20 September

Note. The Melbourne course (5 & 6 September) and Adelaide course (9 & 10 October) are full. No more registrations being taken.

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

Irrigation Australia Conference and Exhibition 2008. To be held 20 □ 22 May 2008 at Melbourne Exhibition Centre. The biennial event is off to a terrific start with 70% of exhibition space already booked. Jolyon Burnett, IAL CEO, says that the National Plan for Water Security is a great opportunity for the irrigation industry to demonstrate that it uses smart technology and we have the most efficient systems. For bookings or information, contact Event Manager Robby Clark, phone 02 9556 7992, email irrigation@eft.com.au or visit the website www.irrigationaustralia.com.au

Harvey Water Expo. Harvey Water, in partnership with Irrigation Australia and Department of Agriculture and Food WA, is hosting an Irrigation Expo Wednesday 5 September at Harvey Agriculture College (South West Highway, Wokalup) between 10am and 2pm. The Expo will highlight the advantages for growers in converting from surface irrigation to pressurised systems. Special guest speaker is Professor Steve Raine (University of Southern Queensland & CRC for Irrigation Futures). Mark Rivers (DAFWA) will also report on research into the productivity gains associated with conversion to pressurised systems in the Harvey region. For more info contact Doug Hall, phone 08 9474 9089, email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au Mark Rivers (DAFWA) will also report on research into the productivity gains associated with conversion to pressurised systems in the Harvey region. For more info contact Doug Hall, phone 08 9474 9089, email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au

Certified Irrigation Designer (CID) Workshop. In conjunction with Steve Raine's visit to WA, there will be a workshop Friday 7 September at Harvey Water offices for CIDs interested in centre-pivot irrigation. A brief overview of the CID framework will also be presented. Non-CIDs are welcome. If you are interested in attending the Expo and require further details please contact Doug Hall, phone 08 9474 9089, email doug.hall@irrigation.org.au

Riverland field days 19 & 20 September. Field day site Barmera. Featuring the Improving Irrigation Efficiency project's □ Irrigation Efficiency Avenue□, consisting of irrigation related businesses dedicated to irrigation technology and efficiency.

CGS Groundwater short courses. For information on courses go to www.groundwater.com.au

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SMART APPROVED WATERMARK UPDATE

New campaign to support Smart WaterMark products. This spring and summer will see a major campaign to encourage retailers to stock and consumers to choose products bearing the Smart Approved WaterMark and save water. The consumer and retailer campaign will include a comprehensive media public relations program targeting print, radio and television, beginning with the launch of a new consumer website in National Water Week, October 21-28. The campaign will direct consumers to the website which will have information about saving water, Smart Watermark products and where to buy them. For more industry information about the mark visit www.smartwatermark.info or the consumer site at: www.smartwatermark.org

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HANDY LINKS

Some fascinating background information about irrigation around the world is available from the following websites (thanks to Tony Tompson from SA and Donna Beattie from Queensland RWUE Program):

Ancient Irrigation and land salinisation

<http://www.geology.ucdavis.edu/~cowen/~GEL115/115CH17oldirrigation.html>

Ancient lessons for modern irrigation <http://www.peopleandplanet.net/doc.php?id=768>

Contemporary population, water use and land salinisation

<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/english/ch02.html>

Salt accumulation due to irrigation using California as an example

<http://www.sci.sdsu.edu/salton/TheSalinityofRivers.html>

New website for NaanDan Australia. NaanDan has developed a new website at

www.naandan.com.au

The website features: information on the company's product range, location and contact details of its dealers, a knowledge centre and technical advice on products and areas serviced, contact details, information on new product releases and company news.

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BOOKSHOP

A wide range of irrigation related books and other publications are available from the IA On-Line Bookshop. Just visit www.irrigation.org.au.

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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