

NPIRD UPDATE

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NPIRD Phase 3 winds up

NPIRD Phase 3 is now in the process of being wound up and arrangements are being made to transfer the administration of uncompleted projects to the new National Program for Sustainable Irrigation. This means that there will be a transition phase over the next few months.

If you are managing a project that is yet to be completed it's business as usual as far as administration is concerned, and program contacts remain as they were for NPIRD.

Irrigation R&D continues under new program

While NPIRD may be winding up, this doesn't end the commitment of Land & Water Australia or the industry to supporting irrigation research and innovation.

The new National Program for Sustainable Irrigation, which will build on the very firm foundations established by NPIRD, is up and running now. The program's research themes are:

- Theme 1. Enhancing the sustainability of irrigation
- Theme 2. Exploring future visions and values
- Theme 3. Informing public policy development.

For more information about the program or becoming an investor contact Murray or Liz Chapman, phone 03 5763 3214, email <rplan@benalla.net.au>.

New program website

The National Program for Sustainable Irrigation website is live at <www.lwa.gov.au/irrigation>. It contains details of the new program, its research program and how to become involved as a financial supporter.

Over time, as projects are completed, reports and information will be added to the site.

The NPIRD website is still online and can be accessed through its address <www.npird.gov.au>. You'll find on

it information about the different phases of the program and a listing of research projects completed, as well as previous editions of NPIRD Update and the newsletter, *WaterWheel*.

Subsurface Drainage Irrigation Insights available

This *Irrigation Insights* is Part 1 of a project, *Best Management Practice for Subsurface Design and Management*. It reviews current practice in subsurface drainage and, from this, a best practice manual has been developed.

The *Irrigation Insight* brings together all available knowledge about subsurface drainage for irrigation. It is in two sections:

- Part 1 – a summary and comparison of the range of practices across Australia.
- Part 2 – regional reports providing detailed information on practices in each region.

It is available through Land & Water Australia, <www.lwa.gov.au/catalogue>.

For information about the project contact Evan Christen, CSIRO Land & Water Griffith, phone 02 6960 1500, email <evan.christen@csiro.au>.

Irrigation Insights on the go

Three new *Irrigation Insights* titles are currently on the go:

- *Partial Rootzone Drying and Regulated Deficit Irrigation*. Look out for this compendium of research and practice into PRD and RDI. A draft is scheduled for completion in September. Sure to prove a popular title, it will be released in hard copy, as a CD and posted on the National Program for Sustainable Irrigation website.
- *Water Use Efficiency*. This *Irrigation Insights* promises to be a very important publication that brings together research and theory to do with WUE. Scheduled for completion in November this year.

- *Evaporation from on farm storages.* Evaporation from large on farm storages is an issue, particularly in northern NSW and southern Queensland. This *Insights* will outline methods and options for controlling evaporation. Budgets will also be incorporated. Scheduled for release in October this year.

For more information contact Anne Currey, phone 02 6628 7079, email <anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au>.

Hydraulic efficiency benchmarking report published

David Watts and Phillip Thompson from Murray Irrigation have just completed a project, *Improving Hydraulic Efficiency of Irrigation and Drainage Systems Through Benchmarking*. The aims of the project were to:

- develop a practical set of hydraulic performance indicators for a gravity fed irrigation system which could be applied nationally and internationally
- evaluate the economic benefits of the hydraulic performance indicators
- evaluate different options to improve hydraulic performance
- develop incentives to encourage both water managers and users to achieve optimum irrigation and drainage efficiency and minimize impacts on streams and aquifers.

For a copy of the report, go the *reports and information* page of the NPIRD website, <www.npird.gov.au>.

Know the Flow 2

This project, which focuses on irrigation supply meters, follows on from the original *Know the Flow* project and has two related components.

The first is a meter installation training component and the second relates to meter testing facilities.

Objectives for the training component are to:

1. develop a generic, nationwide training program in meter selection, installation, operation and maintenance, that is suitable for use by water authority staff and meter suppliers, contractors and installers
2. develop a training manual for use as followup learning materials for those who attend the training program
3. ensure that the training manual is suitable for use by those people who can't attend the training course.

Objectives for the testing component are to:

1. identify or, if necessary, develop independent and credible meter testing facilities capable of testing a range of irrigation meter types and sizes
2. establish a field testing facility for a range of irrigation meter types and sizes.

The project is being managed by ANCID on behalf of NPIRD. For more information contact project coordinator, Andrew Sinn, Sunraysia Rural Water Authority, phone 03 5021 9750, email <sinna@srwa.org.au>.

ERA workshop reviews progress

A 2-day workshop was held in June to review progress on the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) project. Workshop objectives were to:

- review processes used and outcomes from the first part of the project (problem formulation)
- review the progress of case studies done on the Fitzroy (Qld), Ord (WA) and Goulburn-Broken (Vic) rivers
- review a preliminary draft ecological risk assessment protocol being developed for irrigation regions.

A report on workshop outcomes will be available soon. For more information contact Barry Hart, email <barry.hart@sci.monash.edu.au>.

Researching the future

At *Irrigation Australia 2002 Conference and Exhibition*, Land & Water Australia and NPIRD sponsored a one-day workshop on "Researching the Future". The aim of the workshop, which was organised by the National Irrigation Science Network (NISN), was to develop scenarios and from these identify important irrigation research issues.

Keynote speakers were Patrick Dodson, from the Lingiari Foundation, and Robyn Williams, presenter of the ABC's *Science Show*. The workshop developed four scenarios, as follows:

- Fortress Australia
- The Big Drought
- Australia as a food bowl
- Super efficiency.

From these research issues for the future were identified.

For more information, contact NISN Coordinator, Jeremy Cape, phone 08 8303 8552, email <jeremy.cape@csiro.au>.

Water Use Efficiency

Getting industry feedback and agreement on definitions and a framework for WUE has been the focus of a project currently being managed by Aquatech Consulting.

Later this month Aquatech will be sending and emailing out a letter and short document summarising definitions and a framework that were previously developed and agreed on by representatives from the irrigation industry. The letter will be asking recipients to respond with their feedback.

If you would like to receive a copy of the letter and contribute to the process, contact Aquatech Consulting, phone 02 6792 1265, email <office@aquatechcon.com.au>.

CRC for Irrigation Futures

Earlier this year, Land & Water Australia, along with a number of other organisations, contributed funds to develop a bid to establish a CRC for Irrigation Futures.

The bid was lodged in May and is being considered by the CRC Office. Applicants who successfully reach the next round of the 3-stage process will be notified early in August with the possibility of an interview in October or November.

If the bid is successful the CRC will be established late next year.

The National Program for Sustainable Irrigation and the CRC both have the aim of supporting and expanding Australian irrigation R&D. If the CRC bid is successful, ways of merging with the National Program for Sustainable Irrigation will be explored so that their activities enable uninterrupted investment in sustainable irrigation research and innovation. Neither program expects that industry will resource both initiatives.

For more information about the CRC contact Jeremy Cape, phone 08 8303 8552, email <jeremy.cape@csiro.au>.

Well known researcher wins MacLean Iedema Award

Well known researcher in the irrigation industry, John Blackwell from CSIRO Land & Water at Griffith, was the winner of the 4th MacLean Iedema Award at *Irrigation Australia 2002*, held in Sydney in May.

The Irrigation Association of Australia, which organises the biennial conference and exhibition, instituted the award in memory of members Scott MacLean and Don Iedema, who were tragically killed in a aircraft accident in 1995. The award recognises outstanding contribution by an individual to the irrigation industry.

Congratulations John.

More information

For more information contact program coordinators, Liz and Murray Chapman, phone 03 5763 3214, email <rplan@benalla.net.au>.

About NPIRD

NPIRD is funded jointly by the Commonwealth Government, through Land & Water Australia, and industry and agency funding partners. These partners are:

- Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Sunwater, Queensland
- NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation
- WA Water and Rivers Commission
- CSIRO Land and Water
- Goulburn-Murray Water
- NSW State Water
- NSW irrigators
- Southern Rural Water (Victoria)
- South West Water (WA)
- Ord Irrigation Cooperative
- Sunraysia Rural Water
- Wimmera Mallee Water
- Agriculture WA

South Australia has committed to become a funding partner in the new National Program.