



WaterWheel

NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR IRRIGATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
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Welcome

In this edition of WaterWheel you will find a supplement detailing the current research and development projects being undertaken through NPIRD. The projects address priority areas of:

- **technology adoption and education;**
- **drainage, nutrients, salinity and pesticides;**
- **water supply systems;**
- **conjunctive water use; and**
- **infrastructure refurbishment.**

I hope you find it useful.

In the next edition we plan to outline our completed projects.

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Project DAV 15: Sultana grape growers discuss pruning techniques at a 'Drying for profit' field day.



**Land & Water
Resources
Research &
Development
Corporation**

This publication is funded by the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (LWRRDC), GPO Box 2182, Canberra ACT 2601. LWRRDC's mission is to provide national leadership in utilising R&D to improve the long-term productive capacity, sustainable use, management and conservation of Australia's land, water and vegetation resources. The corporation will establish directed, integrated and focused research and development programs where there is clear justification for additional public funding to expand or enhance the contribution of R&D to sustainable management of natural resources.

• Review of NPIRD

The National Program for Irrigation R&D commenced in 1993, based on the National Irrigation Research Fund Strategy. The National program was supported, through LWRRDC, by irrigation agencies and irrigators in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Contributions of \$1.2million were available for investment in R&D each year.

Following requests from our clients, this edition of *WaterWheel* outlines the projects currently being funded by the program, as well as their progress. The program has recently been reviewed and a number of the projects subjected to a Benefit/Cost Analysis. All achieved positive returns – some extremely high.

The review was carried out with key clients and the Management Committee, and sets the scene for the next three to five years. It identified the need to focus the program on improving the efficiency of use of irrigation water. There

was general agreement that this would lead to improved natural resource sustainability, put more dollars in the pockets of irrigators and improve environmental conditions in our rivers, streams and marine environments.

To achieve this, more emphasis will be placed on:

- **R&D that integrates water delivery systems, on-farm applications and off-farm drainage;**
- **developing adoption techniques applicable to irrigation areas to ensure R&D results are applied;**
- **improvement of communication with our clients, and**
- **development of irrigation research skills.**

NPIRD will work closely with other R&D providers (particularly the Murray-Darling Basin Commission and the commodity R&D corporations) to eliminate duplication, and get them more involved in irrigation

R&D including improvement of water use efficiency.

Irrigation R&D has been a Cinderella as far as research funds go – but at the same time 20-25% of agricultural production comes from irrigated agriculture.

The irrigation industry is facing serious challenges over the next 3-5 years.

Competition for water resources is increasing, there is greater emphasis on protection of the environment and productivity must be improved if we are to remain competitive. To meet these challenges there will be a need for quality factual information available at farm, regional and national levels. This program aims to be a key provider of this information.

We will deliver this through focused research and development projects which are integrated with extension providers and supported by irrigators, the irrigation industry and the broader community.

• **Streamlined information**

Streamline, the national natural resources information network, makes information gathering easier than ever before. *Streamline* contains online references to both LWRRDC projects and other published R&D documents, via the National Library's OZ-LINE network.

It also produces a regular series of booklets called 'Streamline Update', and information is available on CD-ROM.

The database is an excellent way to publicise your recently published natural resources information.

Just contact:

Pam Handyside, Streamline Manager

Phone: (06) 236 6267; **Fax:** (06) 236 6440, or **Email:** infoscan@acslink.net.au.

To arrange access to Streamline via the OZ-LINE network,

Phone: (06) 262 1531; **Fax:** (06) 273 1180 or **Email:** networks@nla.gov.au.

• Keeping in touch – NPIRD Management Committee Notes

• 22nd Meeting: 18 June 1996

Key issues from the minutes:



• The **circulation list for WaterWheel** needs to be extended (*readers please note – if you have ideas, let the coordinator know*)



• NPIRD will contribute \$4,000 to the **Southern Murray-Darling Irrigated Cropping Forum** and will negotiate attendance from LWRRDC with organisers. Steve Mills and Geoff Wright will probably represent the NPIRD Committee. At a future committee meeting, the issue of funding forums such as this will be integrated into program funding



• **Representation on the NFF – Water Advisory Group** is to be followed up



• **Two new projects** have been approved: UAD14 and SKP1 (see Supplement)

• **The strategic plan** for research and development priorities is to be released within the next few weeks



• **\$20,000 has been allocated to review the performance of the five Participative Action Projects** aimed at improving the adoption of our R&D (Technology Adoption and Education)



• **Three existing projects will obtain additional funding** to enhance adoption of results – these are CWN 9, UME 12 and DAV 11



• **The call for/ commissioning of projects** will take place as soon as the action plan is complete, and future calls for R&D projects will be publicised through WaterWheel, as well as the usual channels



• **Review of projects** will continue, including assessment of adoption of results by clients

• 23rd Meeting: 25/26 July 1996

Key issues from the minutes:

• A **Communication Plan** is being prepared for NPIRD. A workshop is to be held in early September with the consultant ECONNECT.

• **Negotiations with MDBC for joint calls for research projects** are underway, but the MDBC timetable means that funds could not be committed until next financial year. It was decided to join with MDBC on a call commencing with expressions of interest in November, but that NPIRD should have its own call in 1996/97 based on priority issues identified in the new action plan.

• **The budget strategy** will also address additional funding for some projects, to ensure their successful completion (including technology transfer). The six new projects should commence as soon as possible.

• **'Repair Options for Concrete-Lined Channels'** – progress is being made with the commissioning of this project involving NSW, Victoria and Queensland, and it is envisaged that additional funding will be required. This funding will be approved by the Committee subject to documentation of support by the agencies, some modification of the project proposal and completion of the project schedule.

• **The priorities for the Action Plan** were discussed, and the Coordinator is to prepare a draft Action Plan which will be circulated to the Committee for approval and publication.

• *Irrigation Expo a huge success*

Irrigation Australia was recently held at the Adelaide Convention and Exhibition Centre, and event organisers have enthusiastically declared it a huge success.

During the three days, 1,710 people visited the industry exhibition, while over 400 delegates attended the annual conference of the Irrigation Association of Australia.

The format of the exhibition was designed to be of interest to horticultural, agricultural and urban irrigators, manufacturers, distributors and water authorities. Visitors came from all areas of Australia, and from Malaysia, Thailand, New Zealand, Korea and Indonesia.

The displays included exhibits from more than 100 irrigation companies, representing Australia, the USA, Italy, Greece, Israel and Asia.

Many organisations launched new products and technology, and 14 products were entered in the Rural Press Innovation Award. Nelson Irrigation Corporation won this respected award with its new state of the art R2000 sprinkler.

The concurrent IAA conference was also very strongly supported. Speakers addressed a diverse range of topics, including water pricing, turf issues, nursery water management and waste water disposal. Keynote speaker, Professor Peter Wolff of the University of Kassel in Germany, gave a thought-provoking paper on water issues facing the world today, while Professor John Lovering gave insights into the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

The next Irrigation Event is to be held in May 1998 at the new \$220 million Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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