



Central Downs Irrigators Newsletter

June 2015

Note from the Chair

The need for irrigators to respond to and provide leadership on issues relating to accessing irrigation water has not diminished. The following are just some of the issues Central Downs Irrigators Limited has been involved with during the past year. We continue to act on your behalf and if you feel there are any issues that need addressing please contact one of the board members.

The Directors of CDIL thank you for your support and wish you a successful irrigation season.

Graham Clapham

Chairman

Resource development.

CDIL along with Cotton Australia and AgForce successfully provided input into the Regional Interests Planning Act, which gives additional protection to irrigators from the impacts of resource development in Priority Agricultural Areas. CDIL also has a seat on the steering panel for the Condamine Alluvium connectivity research project, which is overseen by the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment,(OGIA). This research aims to better understand the extent of connectivity between the Condamine Alluvium and the underlying Walloon Coal Measures. CDIL has been calling for this research since commissioning the Hillier report into the possible effects of CSG mining on the Condamine Alluvium in 2010. A key element of this project has been the core drilling and pump testing which has taken place near Rangers Bridge and Norwin. Despite the separation distance of these sites, the results are remarkably similar, and at this stage point to a low degree of connectivity.

Murray Darling Basin issues

During the past 12 months the Federal Environment Department has conducted three tender rounds, attempting to buy back groundwater from the Central Condamine Alluvium. Irrigators offered water for purchase to the Commonwealth Government in all three tenders but no tender was accepted, with the Department claiming that the prices asked by irrigators were “not representing value for money”. During recent discussions between CDIL and Departmental officials it was highlighted that there are now a number of irrigator to irrigator permanent trades which have set a market value. CDIL is endeavouring to obtain an independent valuation report on groundwater entitlement, hoping this information along with recent irrigator trade values will assist the Department to recover water in future tender rounds. Other options for recovering water and bringing use to sustainable levels were canvassed, however CDIL believes that the willing buyer willing seller concept through the tender system offers the best and fairest option at this time. Previously there has been little interest in recovering surface water from our region, largely due to the distance we are from the environmental assets which would benefit from the recovered water, and the absence of shepherding arrangements which would enable recovered water to be delivered to those downstream environmental sites. Federal and State authorities have recently conducted modelling on recovering water above Beardmore Dam in an attempt to understand if it might be beneficial to



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environmental outcomes in the northern basin. While CDIL is not opposed to surface water recovery through the voluntary buyback tender system or the on farm water efficiency programme, we have highlighted irrigator concerns that any downstream shepherding arrangements should not negatively affect current long standing access rules.

Other issues

Irrigators would be aware that the State no longer owns, maintains or reads water meters. While the ownership and maintenance of metering equipment may not be an issue, CDIL believes strongly that the State agency should still read meters and ensure that they comply with accepted metering standards. CDIL maintains membership of the Queensland Farmers Federation at the State level and National Irrigators Council at the Federal level. Your membership dues to CDIL help to support the cost effective representation that these two bodies give local irrigators in Brisbane and Canberra on a range of issues critical to irrigators.

Please visit the website for any updates

www.cdil.com.au

We are in the early stages of planning an irrigator focused field day. All irrigators are welcome to attend. Date and further details will be issued shortly.

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